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THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

EDITED BY HIS SON-IN-LAW,

THE REV. WILLIAM HANNA, LL.D.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH: THOMAS CONSTABLE AND CO.

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LECTURES

ON THE

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY

THOMAS CHALMERS, D.D. LL.D.

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1871

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LECTURES ON THE ROMANS.

INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

It is possible to conceive the face of our world overspread with a thick and midnight darkness, and without so much as a particle of light to alleviate it from any one quarter of the firmament around us. In this case it were of no avail to the people who live in it that all of them were in possession of sound and perfect eyes. The organ of sight may be entire and yet nothing be seen, from the total absence of external light among the objects on every side of us. Or in other words, to bring about the perception of that which is without, it is not enough that we have the power of vision among men; but in addition to this, there must be a visibility in the trees, and the houses, and the mountains, and the living creatures, which are now in the ordinary discernment of men.

But, on the other hand, we may reverse the supposition. We may conceive an entire luminousness to be extended over the face of nature—while the faculty of sight was wanting among all the individuals of our species. In this case, the external light would be of as little avail towards our perception of any object at a distance from us, as the mere possession of the sense of seeing was in the former instance. Both must conspire to the effect of our being rendered conversant with the external world through the medium of the eye. And if the power of vision was not enough, without a visibility on the part of the things which are around us, by God saying, Let there be light—as little is their visibility enough, without the power of vision, stamped as an endowment by the hand of God on the creatures whom He has formed.

Now we can conceive that both these defects or disabilities in

the way of vision may exist at the same time—or that all the world was dark, and that all the people in the world were blind. To emerge out of this condition there must be a twofold process begun and carried forward, and at length brought to its full and perfect termination:—light must be poured upon the earth, and the faculty of seeing must be conferred upon its inhabitants. One can imagine, that instead of the light being made instantaneously to burst upon us in its highest splendour, and instead of the faculty being immediately bestowed upon us in full vigour to meet and to encounter so strong a tide of effulgency—that both these processes were conducted in a way that was altogether gradual—that the light, for example, had its first weak glimmering; and that the eye, in the feebleness of its infancy, was not overcome by it—that the light advanced with morning step to a clearer brilliancy; and that the eye, rendered able to bear it, multiplied the objects of its sight, and took in a wider range of perception—that the light shone at length unto the perfect day; and that the eye, with the last finish upon its properties and its powers, embraced the whole of that variety which lies within the present compass of human contemplation. We must see that if one of these processes be gradual, the other should be gradual also. By shedding too strong a light upon weak eyes we may overpower and extinguish them. By granting too weak a light to him who has strong eyes, we make the faculty outstrip the object of its exercise, and thus incur a waste of endowment. By attemping the one process to the other, we maintain throughout all the stages that harmony which is so abundantly manifested in the works of Nature and Providence, between man as he actually is and the circumstances by which man is actually surrounded.

These preliminary statements will, we trust, be of some use in illustrating the progress not of natural but of spiritual light, along that path which forms the successive history of our world. Whatever discernment Adam had of the things of God in Paradise, the fall which he experienced was a fall into the very depths of the obscurity of midnight. The faculties he had in a state of innocence made him able to perceive that the Creator who formed him took pleasure in all that He had formed; and rejoiced over them so long as He saw that they were good. But when they ceased to be good, and became evil—when sin had crept into our world in the shape of a novelty as yet unheard, and as yet unprovided for—when the relation of man to his

Maker was not merely altered, but utterly and diametrically reversed—when from a loyal and affectionate friend he had become at first a daring, and then a distrustful and affrighted rebel—Adam may, when a sense of integrity made all look bright and smiling and serene around him, have been visited from Heaven with the light of many high communications; nor could he feel at a loss to comprehend how He who was the Fountain of moral excellence should cherish, with a Father's best and kindest regards, all those whom He had filled and beautified and blessed with its unsullied emanations:—But, after the gold had become dim, how He whose eye was an eye of unspotted holiness could look upon it with complacency—after the sentence had been incurred, how, while truth and unchangeableness were the attributes of God, it ever could be reversed by the lips of Him who pronounced it—after guilt with all its associated terrors had changed to the view of our first parents the aspect of the Divinity, how the light of His countenance should ever beam upon them again with an expression of love or tenderness—These were the mysteries which beset and closed and shrouded in thickest darkness the understandings of those who had just passed out of innocence into sin. Till God made His first communication, there was no external light to alleviate that despair and dreariness which followed the first visitation of a feeling so painful and so new as the consciousness of evil. And if the agitations of the heart have any power to confuse and to unsettle the perceptions of the understanding—if remorse and perplexity and fear go to disturb the exercise of all our judging and all our discerning faculties—if under the engrossment of one great and overwhelming apprehension we can neither see with precision nor contemplate with steadiness—above all, if under the administration of a righteous God there be a constant alliance between spiritual darkness and a sense of sin unpardoned or sin unexpiated—Then may we be sure that an obscurity of the deepest character lay upon the first moments in the history of sinful man: and which required both light from Heaven upon his soul, and a renovation of its vitiated and disordered faculties, ere it could be effectually dissipated.

From this point then the restoration of spiritual light to our benighted world takes its commencement—when Adam was utterly blind, and the canopy over his head was palled in impenetrable darkness. To remove the one disability was in itself to do nothing—to remove the other disability was in itself

to do nothing. Both must be removed ere Adam could again see. Both may have been removed instantaneously; and by one fiat of Omnipotence such a perfection of spiritual discernment may have been conferred on our first parent, and such a number of spiritual truths have been made by a direct communication from Heaven to stand around him, as in a single moment would have ushered him into all the splendours of a full and finished revelation. But this has not been God's method in His dealings with a sinful world. Spiritual light and spiritual discernment were not called forth to meet each other in all the plenitude of an unclouded brilliancy, at the bidding of His immediate voice. The outward truth has been dealt out by a gradual process of revelation—and the inward perception of it has been made to maintain a corresponding pace through a process equally gradual. A greater number of spiritual objects has been introduced, from one time to another, into the field of visibility—and the power of spiritual vision has from one age to another been made to vary and to increase along with them.

Those truths which make up the body of our written revelation may be regarded as so many objects on which visibility has been conferred by so many successive communications of light from Heaven. They were at first few in number; and these few were offered to mankind under the disguise of a rather vague and extended generality. The dawn of this external revelation was marked by the solitary announcement given to our outcast progenitors—that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent. To this other announcements were added in the progress of ages—and even the great truth which lay enveloped in the very first of them had a growing illumination cast upon it in the lapse of generations. The promise given to Adam brightened into a more cheering and intelligible hope, when renewed to Abraham in the shape of an assurance that through one of his descendants all the families of the earth were to be blessed; and to Jacob, that Shiloh was to be born, and that to Him the gathering of the people should be; and to Moses, that a great Prophet was to arise like unto himself; and to David, that one of his house was to sit upon his throne for ever; and to Isaiah, that one was to appear who should be a light unto the Gentiles, and the salvation of all the ends of the earth; and to Daniel, that the Messiah was to be cut off, but not for Himself, and that through Him reconciliation was to be made for iniquity, and an

everlasting righteousness was to be brought in ; and to John the Baptist, that the kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and the Prince of that kingdom was immediately to follow in the train of his own ministrations ; and to the apostles in the days of our Saviour upon earth, that He with whom they companied was soon to be lifted up for the healing of the nations, and that all who looked to Him should live ; and, finally, to the apostles after the day of Pentecost, when—fraught with the full and explicit tidings of a world's atonement and a world's regeneration—they went forth with the doctrine of Christianity in its entire copiousness, and have transmitted it to future ages in a book of which it has been said, that no man shall add thereto, and that no man shall take away from it.

This forms but a faint and a feeble outline of that march by which God's external revelation hath passed magnificently onwards from the first days of our world, through the twilight of the patriarchal ages and the brightening of the Jewish dispensation—aided as it was by the secondary lustre of types and of ceremonies—and the constant accumulation of Prophecy, with its visions every century becoming more distinct, and its veil becoming more transparent, and the personal communications of God manifest in the flesh, who opened His mouth amongst us, but still opened it in parables—insomuch that when He ascended from His disciples He still left them in wonder and dimness and mystery—Till, by the pouring forth of the Holy Spirit from the place which He had gone to occupy, the evidence of inspiration received its last and its mightiest enlargement, which is now open to all for the purpose of perusal, but so shut against every purpose of augmentation, that in this respect it may be said—its words are closed up and sealed to the time of the end.

The Epistle to the Romans forms one of the most complete and substantial products of this last and greatest illumination. In this document the visibility of external revelation is poured forth—not merely on the greatest variety of Christian doctrine, but on that doctrine so harmoniously blended with the truths of human experience, so solidly reared from the foundation of Jesus Christ and of Him crucified, into a superstructure at once firm and graceful and stately—so branching forth into all the utilities of moral and practical application—and at length, from an argument bearing upon one great conclusion, so richly efflorescing into all the virtues and accomplishments which serve both to mark and to adorn the person of regenerated man. Such is the

worth and the density and the copiousness of this epistle—that did our power of vision keep pace at all with the number and the value of those spiritual lessons which abound in it, then indeed should we become the children of light, be rich in a wisdom that the world knoweth not, in a wisdom which is unto salvation.

But the outward light by which an object is rendered visible is one thing—and the power of vision is another. That these two are not only distinct in respect of theoretical conception, but were also experimentally distinct from each other in the actual history of God's communications to the world, will, we trust, be made to appear from several passages of that revealed history in the Bible: and from one single appeal which we shall make to the experience of our hearers.

The first passage is in 1 Pet. i. 10-12: "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into." This passage sets the old prophets before us in a very striking attitude. They positively did not know the meaning of their own prophecies. They were like men of dim and imperfect sight, whose hand was guided by some foreign power to the execution of a picture, and who, after it was finished, vainly attempted, by straining their eyes, to explain and to ascertain the subject of it. They were the transmitters of a light which at the same time did not illuminate themselves. They uttered the word, or they put it down in writing, as it was given to them—and then they searched by their own power, but searched in vain for the signification of it. They inquired diligently what the meaning of the Spirit could be when it testified of the sufferings of Christ and the glory of Christ. But till that Spirit gave the power of discernment, as well as set before them the objects of discernment, their attempts were nugatory; and indeed they were sensible of this, and acquiesced in it. It was told them by revelation, that the subject-matter of their prophecy was not for themselves but for others—even for those to whom the gospel

should be preached in future days, and who along with the ministration of the external word were to receive the ministration of the Holy Ghost—whose office it is to put into the mouths of prophets the things which are to be looked to and believed, and whose office also it is to put into the hearts of others the power of seeing and believing these things. And it serves clearly to mark the distinction between these two offices, that the prophets alluded to in this passage presented to the world a set of truths which they themselves did not understand; and that again the private disciples of Peter, who were not so honoured as to be made the original and inspired authors of such a communication, were honoured with the far more valuable privilege of being made to understand it.

This we think will appear still more clearly from another passage of the same apostle in 2 Pet. i. 19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." No prophecy is of private interpretation. It was not suggested by the natural sense of him who uttered it—and as little is it understood, or can it be explained, by the natural powers of the same person. He was the mere recipient of a higher influence, and he conveyed what he had thus received to the world—speaking not of his own will but just as he was moved by the Holy Ghost—and enabled to discern or to expound the meaning of what he had thus spoken, not of his own power, but just as the same Holy Ghost who gave him the materials of contemplation, gave him also the faculty of a just and true contemplation. The light, of which he was barely the organ of transmission, shone in a dark place so long as it shone upon the blind; and not till the blind was made to see—not till the eyes of those who were taking heed to the letter of the prophecy were opened to perceive the life and meaning and spirit of the prophecy—not till that day which had dawned, and that day-star which had arisen on the outward page of revelation had also dawned and arisen upon their own hearts—not, in short, till the great agent of all revelation, even the Holy Spirit who had already furnished the object of perception in the word, had also furnished the organ of perception in the understanding,—not till

then were the inquirers after the truth as it is in Jesus effectually introduced to a full acquaintance with all its parts, or to the full benefit of all its influence.

We cannot take leave of this passage without adverting to the importance of that practical injunction which is contained in it. They who are still in darkness are called upon to look, and with earnestness too, to a particular quarter—and that is the word of God—and to do so *until* the power of vision was granted to them. If a blind man were desirous of beholding a landscape, and had the hope at the same time of having his sight miraculously restored to him, he might, even when blind, go to the right post of observation, and turn his face to the right direction, and thus wait for the recovery of that power which was extinguished. And, in like manner, we are all at the right post, when we are giving heed to our Bibles. We are all going through a right exercise, when with the strenuous application of our natural powers we are reading and pondering and comparing and remembering the words of the testimony; and if asked how long we should persevere in this employment, let us persevere in it with patience and prayer until, as Peter says, the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.

That John the Baptist should not know himself to have been he who was to come in the spirit and power of Elijah, and hence, in reply to the question, Art thou Elias? should say—I am not; whereas our Saviour affirmed of him that he was the Elias who should come—this ignorance of his may be as much due to the want of outward information about the point as to any lack in the faculty of discernment. The same thing, however, can scarcely be said of his ignorance of the true character of the very Messiah whom he himself foretold—insomuch that though he had baptized Him and attested Him to be the Lamb of God, and had seen the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove, he yet seems afterwards to have been so much startled by the obscurity of His circumstances, and by the style of His companionship—which looked unsuitable to the character of a great Prince and Deliverer, that, in perplexity about the matter, he sent his disciples to Jesus to ask whether He was the person who should come or they had to look for another? He laboured under such a disadvantage, whether of darkness or of blindness, about the whole nature of the new dispensation, that though in respect of light he was greater than the greatest of the prophets who had gone before him, yet in the very same respect he was less than the

least in the kingdom of heaven ; or less than the least enlightened of the Christian disciples who should come after him.

The constant misapprehension of our Saviour's own immediate disciples, of which we read so much in the Gospels, was certainly due as much to their being blind as to their being in the dark—to their defect in the power of seeing as to any defect in the visibility of what was actually set before them.

We read of our Saviour's sayings being hid from them that they perceived not—and of His dealing out the light of external truth to them as their eyes were able to bear it—and of His averring, in spite of all He had dealt out in the course of His personal ministrations upon earth—of His averring at the close of these ministrations, that as yet they knew nothing, though if they had had the power of discernment they might surely have learned much from what is now before us in the Gospels, and of which they were both the eye and the ear witnesses. We further read, that after the resurrection, when He met two of His disciples, and the eyes of their body were holden that they should not know Him, just as the eyes of their mind were holden that they should not know the things which were said in Moses and the Prophets and all the Scriptures concerning Himself, they at length came to recognise His person—not by any additional light thrown upon the external object, but simply by their eyes being opened ; and they also came to recognise Him in the Scriptures—not by any change or any addition to the word of their testimony, but simply by their understandings being opened to understand them. We also read of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—that event on which our Saviour set such an importance as to make it more than an equivalent for His own presence in the way of teaching and enlightening the minds of His apostles. “If I go not away, he will not come unto you—but if I depart, then him, who is not yet given because I am not yet glorified, I will send unto you. And he will guide you into all truth, and take of my things, and show them unto you.” There is no doubt that He showed them new things, which we have in the Epistles ; and so made the light of external revelation shine more fully and brightly upon them. But there is as little doubt that, in His office as a Revealer, He made them see old things more clearly than before ; and that by a direct work on the power of mental perception He brought them to their remembrance ; and He made them skilful in the discernment of Scripture—a term applied exclusively at that time

to the writings of the Old Testament ; and He not only cleared away the external darkness which rested on that part of Christian doctrine that was still unpromulgated, but He strengthened and purified that organ of discernment through which the light both of things new and old finds its way into the heart—inasmuch that we know not two states of understanding which stand more decidedly contrasted with each other than that of the apostles before and of the same apostles after the resurrection, so that from being timid, irresolute, confused, and altogether doubting and unsatisfied inquirers, they became the brave, unshrinking, and consistent ministers of a spiritual faith—looking back both on the writings of the Old Testament and on our Saviour's conversations with other eyes than they had formerly ; and enabled so to harmonize them all with their subsequent revelations, as to make them perceive an evangelical spirit and an evangelical meaning even in those earlier communications, which of themselves shed so dim and so feeble a lustre over the patriarchal and the prophetic ages.

Thus then the office of the Holy Ghost with the apostles was not merely to show them things new respecting Christ, but to make them see things both new and old. The former of His functions, as we said before, has now ceased—nor have we reason to believe that, during the whole currency of our present world, there will another article of doctrine or information be given to us than what is already treasured up in the written and unalterable word of God's communications. But the latter function is still in full exercise : it did not cease with the apostolic age. The external revelation is completed ; but, for the power of beholding aright the truths which it sets before us, we are just as dependent on the Holy Ghost as the apostles of old were. His miraculous gifts and His conveyances of additional doctrine are now over ; but His whole work in the Church of Christ is not nearly over. He has shed all the light that He ever will do over the field of revelation ; but He has still to open the eyes of the blind ; and with every individual of the human race has He to turn him from a natural man—who cannot receive the things of the Spirit—to a spiritual man, by whom alone these things can be spiritually discerned.

There is with many amongst us an undervaluing of this part of the Christian dispensation. The office of the Holy Ghost as a revealer is little adverted to, and therefore little proceeded upon in any of our practical movements. We set ourselves forth

to the work of reading and understanding the Bible just as we would any human composition—and this is so far right; for it is only when thus employed that we have any reason to look for the Spirit's agency in our behalf. But surely the fact of His agency being essential is one not of speculative but of practical importance, and ought to admonish us that there is one peculiarity by which the book of God stands distinguished from the book of a human author—and that is, that it is not enough it should be read with the spirit of attention, but with the spirit of dependence and of prayer.

We should like if this important part in the process of man's recovery to God held a more conspicuous place in your estimation. We should like you to view it as a standing provision for the Church of Christ in all ages. It was not set up for a mere temporary purpose, to shed a fleeting brilliancy over an age of gifted and illuminated men that has now rolled by. Such is the value and such the permanency of this gift of the Holy Ghost, that it almost looks to be the great and ultimate design of Christ's undertaking to obtain the dispensation of it, as the accomplishment of a promise by His Father; and when Peter explained to the multitude its first and most wondrous exhibition on the day of Pentecost, he did not restrict it to one period or to one country of the world. But the gift of the Holy Ghost is "unto you," he says, "and to your children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call." We think that if we saw Christ in person, and had the explanation of our Bibles from His own mouth, this would infallibly conduct us to the highest eminences of spiritual wisdom. But blessed be they who have not seen but yet have believed; and Christ hath expressly told us, that it is better He should go away from the world, for "if he did not go away the Spirit would not come, but that if he went away he would send him." What the mysterious connexion is between Christ's entrance into heaven and the free egress of the Holy Ghost upon earth, it is not for us to inquire. But such is the revealed fact, that we are in better circumstances for being guided unto all truth by having a part and an interest in this promise, than if we had personal access to the Saviour still sojourning and still ministering amongst us. Let us not despise that which has so mighty a place assigned to it in the counsels of God; and if heretofore a darkness has hung over the pages of the word of His testimony, let us feel assured that in Him or in His communications there is no darkness at all. It is not because He is

dark, but because we are blind, that we do not understand Him ; and we give you not a piece of inert orthodoxy, but a piece of information which may be turned to use and to account on your very next perusal of any part of the Bible—when we say that it is the office of the Spirit to open the eye of your mind to the meaning of its intimations, and that God will not refuse His Holy Spirit to those who ask Him.

This brings us by a very summary process to the resolution of the question, How is it that the Spirit acts as a revealer of truth to the human understanding? To deny Him this office, on the one hand, is, in fact, to set aside what by the fullest testimony of the Bible is held forth as the process, in every distinct and individual case, whereby each man at his conversion is called out of darkness into marvellous light. On the other hand, to deny such a fulness and such a sufficiency of doctrine in the Bible, as if beheld and believed is enough for salvation, is to count it necessary that something should be added to the words of the prophecy of this book, which if any man do God will add unto him all the plagues that are written therein. There is no difficulty in effecting a reconciliation between these two parties. The Spirit guides unto all truth, and all truth is to be found in the Bible—the Spirit therefore guides us unto the Bible. He gives us that power of discernment by which we are wisely and intelligently conducted through all its passages. His office is not to brighten into additional splendour the sun of revelation, or even to clear away any clouds that may have gathered over the face of it ; His office is to clarify our organs of perception, and to move away that film from the spiritual eye which, till He begins to operate, adheres with the utmost obstinacy in the case of every individual of our species. The ebbs and the alternations of spiritual light in our world are not due to any fluctuating movements in the flame which issues from that luminary that has been hung out as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths. It is due to the variations which take place, of soundness or disease, in the organs of the beholders. That veil which was at one time on the face of Moses is now upon the heart of the unconverted Israelites. The blindness is in their minds, and they are in darkness, just because of this veil being yet untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament or in the New—but this veil which is now upon their faculties of spiritual discernment will simply be taken away. The unconverted of our own country, to whom the gospel is hid, do not perceive it, not because there

is a want of light in the gospel which would need to be augmented, but because the god of this world hath blinded their own minds, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. God hath already commanded all the external light of revelation which He ever proposes to do in behalf of our world—and that light shines upon all to whom the word of salvation is sent. But though it shines upon all, it does not shine into all. He hath already commanded the light to shine out of darkness—and we now wait for that opening and purifying of the organ of conveyance which is upon our person, that it may shine into our hearts, and thence give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus. The period of the new dispensation has been a period of light, as much from the increase of vision as from the increase of visibility. The vacillation of this light from one age to another, is not from any periodical changes in the decay or the brightening of the outward luminary : it is from the partial shittings and openings of a screen of interception. And in those millennial days, when the gospel in full and unclouded brilliancy shall shine upon the world, it will not be because light came down to it from Heaven in a tide of more copious supply, but because God will destroy the face of the covering that is cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.

The light is exceedingly near to every one of us, and we might even now be in the full and satisfactory enjoyment of it, were it not for a something in ourselves. All that is necessary is, that the veil which hangs over our own senses be destroyed. The obstacle in the way of spiritual manifestation does not lie in the dimness of that which is without us, but in the state of our own personal faculties. Let the organ of discernment be only set aright, and the thing to be discerned will then appear in its native brightness, and just in the very features and complexion which it has worn from the beginning, and in which it has offered itself to the view of all whose eyes have been opened by the Spirit of God, to behold the wondrous things contained in the book of God's law. His office is not to deal in variable revelations to a people sitting in darkness, it is to lift up the heavy eyelids of a people who are blind, that they may see the characters of a steady, unchangeable, and ever-during record. The light is near us and round about us ; and all that remains to be done for its being poured into the innermost recesses of every soul, is the destruction of that little tegument which lies

in the channel of communication between the objects which are visible and him for whose use and whose perception they are intended. To come in contact with spiritual light we have not to ascend into heaven and fetch an illuminated torch from its upper sanctuaries—we have not to descend into the deep, and out of the darkness of its hidden mysteries bring to the openness of day some secret thing that before was inaccessible : all that we shall ever find is in that word which is nigh unto us, even in our mouth ; and which, by the penetrating energies of Him in whose hand it becometh a sword, can find its way through all the dark and obstructed avenues of nature, and reach its convictions, and its influences, and its lessons to the very thoughts and intents of the heart. If you be longing for a light which you have not yet gotten, it is worth your knowing that the firmament of a man's spiritual vision is already set round with all its splendours—that not one additional lamp will for your behoof be hung out from the canopy of heaven—that the larger and the lesser lights of revelation are already ordained ; and not so much as one twinkling luminary will either be added or expunged from this hemisphere of the soul, till this material earth and these material heavens be made to pass away : and therefore, if—still sitting in the region and under the shadow of death—there be any of you who long to be ushered into the manifestations of the gospel, know that this is done not by any change in that which is without, but by a change in that which is within—by a medicating process upon your own faculties—by the simplicity of a personal operation.

This is something more than the mere didactic affirmation of a speculative or scholastic Theology. It contains within its bosom the rudiments of a most important practical direction to every reader and every inquirer. If I do not see, not because there is a darkness around me, but because there is a blindness upon me adhering in the shape of a personal attribute, it were a matter of great practical account to ascertain if this defect do not stand associated with other defects in my character and mind which are also personal. And when we read of the way in which the moral and intellectual are blended together in the doctrines of the New Testament—how one apostle affirms that he who hateth his brother is in darkness ; and another, that he who lacketh certain virtues is blind, and cannot see afar off ; and another, that men who did not up to what they knew award the glory and the gratitude to God, had their foolish hearts darkened,

so as to have that which they at one time possessed taken away from them ; and how our Saviour resolves the condemnation of men's unbelief into the principle that they loved the darkness, and therefore wilfully shut their eyes to the truth that was offered—all this goes to demonstrate, that presumptuous sin stands in the way of spiritual discernment ; that evil deeds and the indulgence of evil affections serve to thicken that film which has settled upon the mental eye, and obscures its every perception of the truths of revelation. And this much at least may be turned into a matter of sure and practical inference from all these elucidations—that the man who has not yet awakened to a sense of his iniquities, and not evincing it by putting forth upon them the hand of a strenuous and determined reform—that the man who stifles the voice of conscience within him, and the slave of his inveterate habits, never, either in practice or in prayer, makes an honest struggle for his own emancipation—that he who makes not a single effort against the conformities or the associations of worldliness—and far more he who still persists in its dishonesties or its grosser dissipations—he may stand all his days on the immediate margin of a brightness that is altogether celestial, and yet, in virtue of an interposed barrier which he is doing all he can to make more opaque and impenetrable, may he, with the Bible before his eyes, be groping in all the darkness and in more than all the guilt of heathenism. These sins infuse a sore and deadly distemper into his organs of perception, and by every wilful repetition of them is the distemper more fixed and perpetuated—and therefore it is that we call upon those who desire the light to cherish no hope whatever of its attainment while they persist in any doings which they know to be wrong. We call upon them to frame their doings in turning to the Lord, if they wish the veil to be taken away ; and instead of hesitating about the order of precedency between faith and practice, or about the way in which they each reciprocate upon the other, we call upon them simply and honestly to betake themselves to the apostolical order of—“Awake, O sinner, and Christ shall give thee light.”

There is another set of passages which may be quoted as a counterpart to the former, and which go to demonstrate the connexion between obedience and spiritual light—even as the others prove a connexion between sin and spiritual darkness. “He who is desirous of doing God's will shall know of Christ's doctrine that it is of God.” “He whose eye is single shall have the

whole body full of light." "Light is sown unto the upright, and breaketh forth as the morning to those who judge the widow and the fatherless." "To him who hath, more shall be given"—and "he who keepeth my sayings, to him will I manifest myself." These are testimonies which clearly bespeak what ought to be the conduct of him who is in quest of spiritual manifestation. They will serve to guide the seeker in his way to that rest which all attain who have attained an acquaintance with the unseen Creator. It is a rest which he labours to enter into—and in despite of freezing speculation does he turn the call of repentance to the immediate account of urging himself on to all deeds of conformity with the Divine will—to all good and holy services.

But more than this. It is the Spirit who opens the understanding; and He is affected by the treatment which He receives from the subject on which He operates. It is true that He has been known at times to magnify the freeness of the grace of God by arresting the sinner in the full speed and determination of his impetuous career; and turning him, in despite of himself, to the refuge and the righteousness of the gospel. But speaking generally, He is grieved by resistance, He is quenched by carelessness, He is provoked by the constant baffling of His endeavours to check and to convince and to admonish. On the other hand, He is courted by compliance; He is encouraged by the favourable reception of His influences; He is given in larger measure to those who obey Him; and He follows up your docility under one dictate and one suggestion, by freer and fuller manifestations; in other words, if to thwart your conscience be to thwart Him, and if to act with your conscience be to act with Him—what is this to say but that every inquirer after the way of salvation has something to do at the very outset in the furtherance of his object? What is this to say but that a nascent concern about the soul should instantly be associated with a nascent activity in the prosecution of its interests? What is this to say but that the man should, plainly and in good earnest, forthwith turn himself to all that is right? If he have been hitherto a drunkard, let him abandon his profligacies. If he have been hitherto a profaner of the Sabbath, let him abandon the habit of taking his own pleasure upon that day. If he have been hitherto a defrauder, let him abandon his deceits and his depredations. And though in that region of spiritual light upon which he is entering he will learn that he never can be at peace with God

till he lean on a better righteousness than his own, yet such is the influence of the doctrines of grace on every genuine inquirer, that from the first dawning of his obscure perception of them to the splendour of their full and finished manifestation, is there the breathing and the stir and the assiduous effort of a busy and ever-doing reformation—carrying him onwards from the more palpable rectitudes of ordinary and everyday conduct, to the high and sacred and spiritual elevation of a soul ripening for heaven, and following hard after God.

We know that we are now standing on the borders of controversy. But we are far more solicitous for such an impression as will lead you to act than for any speculative adjustment; and yet how true it is, that for the purpose of a practical effect there is not one instrument so powerful and so prevailing as the peculiar doctrine of the gospel. It is the belief that a debt unextinguishable by us has been extinguished by another—it is the knowledge that that God who can never lay aside either His truth or His righteousness has found out such a way for the dispensation of mercy as serves to exalt and to illustrate them both—it is the view of that great transaction by which He laid on His own Son the iniquities of us all, and has thus done away an otherwise invincible barrier which lay across the path of acceptance—it is the precious conviction that Christ has died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and thus has turned aside the penalties of a law, and by the very act wherewith He has magnified that law and made it honourable—it is this which, seen however faintly by the eye of faith, first looses the bond of despair, and gives a hope, and an outlet for obedience. The subtle metaphysics of the question about the order of succession of the two graces of faith and of repentance may entertain or they may perplex you; but of this you may be very certain, that where there is no repentance all the dogmas of a contentious orthodoxy put together will never make out the reality of faith—and where there is no faith all the drudgeries of a most literal and laborious adherence to the outward matter of the law will never make out the reality of repentance.

Life is too short for controversy. Charged with all the urgency of a matter on hand, we tell you to turn and flee and make fast work of your preparation for a coming eternity. The sum and substance of the preparation is, that you believe what the Bible tells you and do what the Bible bids you. Bestir yourselves, for the last messenger is at the door. There is not time for cold

criticisms, or laborious investigations, or splendid oratory, or profound argument, when death has broke loose amongst us and is spreading his havoc amongst our earthly tabernacles—when he is wresting away from us the delights and the ornaments of our society upon earth—when he is letting us see, by examples the most affecting, of what frail and perishable materials human life is made up—and is dealing out another and another reproof to that accursed delay which leads man to trifle on the brink of the grave, and to smile and be secure, while the weapons of mortality are flying thick around him. When shall we be brought to the beginning of wisdom—to the fear of God—to the desire of doing His will—to the accomplishment of that desire by our believing in the name of His only-begotten Son, and loving one another even as He has given us commandment? Let us work while it is day—and, set in motion by the encouragements of the gospel, let us instantly become the followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting the promises.

You occasionally meet in the New Testament with an express reference to a certain body of writings which are designated by the term of Scripture. We now apply this term to the whole Bible; but in those days it was restricted to that collection of pieces which makes up the Old Testament; for the New was only in the process of its formation, and was not yet completed; and it was not till some time after the evangelists wrote their narratives, and the apostles their communications, that they were gathered into one volume, or made to stand in equal and co-ordinate rank with the inspired books of the former dispensation. So that all which is said of the Scriptures in the New Testament must be regarded as the testimony of its authors to the value and importance of those writings which compose the Old Testament. And it would therefore appear from Paul's Epistle to Timothy, that they are able to make us wise unto salvation.

There can be no doubt, however, that one ingredient of this ability is, that they refer us in a way so distinct and so authoritative to the events of the New Dispensation. They give evidence to the commission of our Saviour, and through Him to the commission of all His apostles. The wisdom which they teach is a wisdom which would guide us forward to the posterior revelations of Christianity. The Old Testament is a region of comparative dimness; but still there is light enough there for making

visible the many indices which abound in it to the more illuminated region of the New Testament—and by sending us forward to that region, by pointing our way to Christ and to the apostles, by barely informing us where we are to get the wisdom that we are in quest of—even though it should not convey it to us by its own direct announcements, it may be said to be able to make us wise unto salvation.

The quotation taken in all its completeness is in full harmony with the statement that we have now given. “From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.” But there is more in it than this. The same light from Heaven by which the doctrine of the New Testament has been made visible, has also made more visible the same doctrine which in the Old lay disguised under the veil of a still unfinished revelation. In the first blush of morning there is much of the landscape that we cannot see at all—and much that we do see, but see imperfectly. The same ascending luminary which reveals to us those more distant tracts that were utterly unobserved, causes to start out into greater beauty and distinctness the fields, and the paths, and the varied forms of nature or of art that are immediately around us, till we come to perceive an extended impress of the character and the goodness of the Divinity over the whole range of our midday contemplation. It is thus with the Bible. That light, in virtue of which the pages of the New Testament have been disclosed to observation, has shed both a direct and a reflected splendour on the pages of the Old—inso-much that from certain chapters of Isaiah which lay shrouded in mystery, both from the prophet himself and from all his countrymen—as in reading of Him who bore the chastisement of our peace, and by whose stripes we are healed, and who poured out His soul unto the death, and made intercession for transgressors—we now draw all the refreshing comfort that beams upon the heart from an intelligent view of our Redeemer’s work of mediation; and behold plainly standing out that which lay wrapt in a kind of hieroglyphic mantle from the discernment of the wisest and most righteous of men under a former dispensation. This power of illumination reaches upward, beyond the confines of the letter of the New Testament, and throws an evangelical light upon the remotest parts of an economy which has now passed away. The rays of our brighter sun have fallen in a flood of glory over the oldest and most distant of our recorded intima-

tions; and a Christian can now read the very first promise in the Book of Genesis, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent," which only served to light up a vague and general expectation in the minds of our first parents—he can now read it with the same full intelligence and comfort wherewith he reads in the Book of the Romans that "the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly."

But there is still more in it than this. If there be any truth in the process whereby the Holy Spirit adds to the power of discernment as well as to the truths which are to be discerned, then this increased power will enable us to see more—not merely in the later but also in the earlier truths of revelation than we would otherwise have done. It is like a blind man in full and open day gradually recovering his sight as he stands by the margin of a variegated parterre. Without any augmentation whatever of the external light is there a progress of revelation to his senses, as to all the beauty and richness and multiplicity of the objects which are before him. What he sees at first may be no more than a kind of dazzling uniformity over the whole length and breadth of that space which is inscribed with so many visible glories; and afterwards may plants and flowers stand out in their individuality to his notice; and then may the distinctive colours of each come to be recognised; and then may the tints of minuter delicacy call forth his admiration—till all which it is competent for man to perceive of what has been so profusely lavished by the hand of the great Artist, either in one general blush of loveliness, or in those nicer and more exquisite streaks of beauty which He hath pencilled in more hidden characters on the specimens of flowers and foliage taken singly, shall all be perceived and all be rapturously enjoyed by the man whose eyes have just been opened into a full capacity for beholding the wondrous things which lie as a spread and a finished spectacle before him. And it is the same with the Bible. That book which stands before the eye of many an accomplished disciple in this world's literature as transfused throughout all its extent with one pervading and indiscriminate character of mysticism, gradually opens up to the eye of him who is rescued from the power of the god of this world, and whose office it is to blind the minds of them who believe not, and he beholds one general impress both of wisdom and of moral beauty upon the whole; and he forms a growing and more special intimacy with its individual passages, and feels a weight of significancy in many of

them which he never felt before ; and he is touched with the discernment of a precious adaptation in this one and that other verse to his own wants and his own circumstances ; and this more minute and microscopic acquaintance with the truths and perception of the excellencies of revelation applies as much to the verses of the Old as it does to the verses of the New Testament—so that if he but grow in spiritual clear-sightedness he will have as growing a relish and observation for the one part of Scripture as he has for the other : And thus it is that, unlike to any human composition, an advancing Christian ever reads the Bible, and the whole Bible, with a new light upon his understanding, and a new impression upon the affections and the principles of his nature. The books of the former dispensation never stand to him in place of the rudiments of a schoolboy which he may now abandon ; but written as they are for our admonition on whom the latter ends of the world have come, and maintaining to this very hour the high functions and authority of a teacher all whose sayings are given by inspiration from God, and all are profitable, and still instrumental in the hands of the Spirit for conveying the whole light and power of His demonstrations into the understanding—let us rest assured that the Old Testament is one of the two olive-trees planted in the house of God, and which is never to be removed ; one of the two golden candlesticks lighted up for the Church of Christ upon earth, and which while that Church has being will never be taken away.

It may illustrate this whole matter if we look to the Book of Psalms, and just think of the various degrees of spirituality and enlargement with which the same composition may be regarded by Jewish and by Christian eyes—as in the praise which waited for God in Zion—and in the pleasure which His servants took in her stones, so that her very dust to them was dear—and in the preference which they made of one day in His courts to a thousand elsewhere—and in the thirsting of their souls to appear before God—and in their remembrance of that time when they went to His house with the voice of joy and praise, and with the multitude that kept holyday—and when exiles from the holy city they were cast down in spirit, and cried from the depths of their banishment in the land of Jordan—and when longing for God, in a dry and thirsty land where no water was, they followed hard after the privilege of again seeing His power and His glory in the sanctuary—and in the songs of deliverance

with which they celebrated their own restoration, when their bands were loosed, and their feet were set in a sure place, and they could offer their vows and their thanksgivings in the courts of the Lord's house, and "in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem." In all this a Jew might express the desires of a fainting and an affectionate heart after that ceremonial in which he had been trained, and that service of the temple which he loved; and yet there is enough in it to sustain even the loftiest flights of devotion in the mind of a Christian. There is a weight of expression altogether commensurate to the feelings and the ardours and the ecstasies of a soul exercised unto godliness. There is a something to meet the whole varied experience of the spiritual life in these ages of a later and more refined dispensation. And such is the divine skilfulness of these compositions, that while so framed as to suit and to satisfy the disciples of a ritual and less enlightened worship, there is not a holy and heavenly disciple of Jesus in our day who will not perceive in the effusions of the Psalmist a counterpart to all the alternations of his own religious history—who will not find in his very words the fittest vehicles for all the wishes and sorrows and agitations to which his own heart is liable—and thus be taught by a writer far less advanced in spirituality than himself, the best utterance of desire for the manifestation of God's countenance, the best utterance of gratitude for the visitations of spiritual joy, the best and most expressive prayers under the distress and darkness of spiritual abandonment.

Let us read over without any comment the whole of the eighty-fourth Psalm, and then simply ask you to consider how those very materials, which form a most congenial piece of devotion for a Jew, admit of being so impregnated with the life and spirit of a higher economy, that they are able to sustain all the views and to express all the aspirations of the most spiritual and exercised Christian?

"How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even Thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee. Blessed is the man whose strength is in Thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well;

the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength ; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer : give ear, O God of Jacob. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine anointed. For a day in Thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield ; the Lord will give grace and glory : no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee."

We think it necessary to say thus much, lest the Old Testament should ever be degraded below its rightful place in your estimation—lest any of you should turn away from it as not fitted to aliment the faith and the holiness of those who lie under a better and a brighter dispensation—lest you should abstain from the habit of reading that letter of the Old Testament, which is abundantly capable of being infused with the same evangelical spirit that gives all its power to the letter of the New Testament. And be assured, that if you want to catch in all its height and in all its celestial purity the raptures of a sustained and spiritual intercourse with Him who sitteth upon the throne, we know nothing fitter to guide your ascending way than those psalms and those prophecies which shone at one time in a dark place ; but may now, upon the earnest heed of him who attentively regards them, cause the day to dawn and the day-star to arise in his heart.

In turning now to one of the fullest expositions of Christian doctrine which is to be found in the New Testament, and which was drawn up for the edification of the most interesting of the early churches, and where in the conduct of his argument Paul seems to have been fully aware of all those elements both of intolerance and philosophy which were in array against him ; and where, as his manner was, he suits and manages his reasoning, with the full consciousness of the kind and metal of resistance that were opposed to him ; and where he had to steer his dexterous way through a heterogeneous assemblage of Gentiles on the one hand, enlightened up to the whole literature and theology of the times, and of Jews on the other, most fiercely and proudly tenacious of that sectarianism which they regarded as their national glory—in such an epistle, written in such circumstances by the accomplished Paul, when we may be sure he would bring up his efforts to the greatness of the occasion, it is

natural to look for all the conviction and all the light that such an able and intellectual champion is fitted to throw over the cause which he has undertaken. And yet what would be the result in a discussion of science or politics or law, we shall not find to be the result in a discussion of Christianity, without such a preparation and such an accompaniment as are not essential to our progress in this world's scholarship. To be a disciple in the school of Christ there must be an affectionate embracing of truth with the heart; and there must be a knowledge which puffeth not up, but humbles and edifies; and there must be a teaching of the Spirit of God, distinct from all those unsanctified acquirements which we labour to win and to defend in the strife it may be of logical contention; for let it be observed, that the wisdom of the New Testament is characterized by moral attributes: it is pure and peaceable and gentle, and easy to be entreated, and full of mercy and good fruits, and without partiality, and without hypocrisy. Let us not confound the illumination of natural argument with that which warms the heart as well as informs the understanding—for it is a very truth, that the whole demonstration of orthodoxy may be assented to by him who is not spiritual but carnal. And while we are yet on the threshold of by far the mightiest and closest of those demonstrations that ever were offered to the world, let us bow “the knee to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that He would grant us, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man: that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that, being rooted and grounded in love, we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth all knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God.”

LECTURE II.

ROMANS I. 1-7.

" Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy Scriptures,) concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh ; and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead : by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name : among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ : to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints : Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."

WE now enter upon the work of exposition.

People, in reading the Bible, are often not conscious of the extreme listlessness with which they pass along the familiar and oft-repeated words of Scripture, without the impression of their meaning being at all present with the thoughts—and how, during the mechanical currency of the verses through their lips, the thinking power is often asleep for whole passages together. And you will therefore allow me, at least at the commencement of this lectureship, first to read over a paragraph, and then to fasten the import of certain of its particular phrases upon your attention, even though these phrases may heretofore have been regarded as so intelligible that you never thought of bestowing an effort or dwelling one moment upon their signification ; and then of reading the passage over again, in such extended or such substituted language as may give us another chance of the sense of it at least being riveted on your understandings. We shall generally endeavour to press home upon you, in the way of application, some leading truth or argument which may occur in any such portion of the epistle as we may have been enabled to overtake.

Ver. 1:—" Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God."

'An apostle'—one who is sent, one who obtains, not a commission to do, but a commission to go—"Go and preach the gospel unto every creature." Jesus Christ is an apostle—because sent—and is therefore called not merely the High Priest, but the Apostle of our profession. God sent His Son into the

world. The call of Paul you read of several times in the Acts, both in the direct narrative of that Book and in his own account of it. And it is to be remarked that as he got his commission in a peculiar way, so he evidently feels himself more called upon than the other apostles to assert and to vindicate its authenticity.

‘Separated unto’—set apart to a particular work. You know that holiness, in its original meaning, just signifies separation from the mass. It is thus that the vessels of the temple are holy; it is thus that the terms common and unclean are held in the language of the ceremonial law to be synonymous; and it is thus that the devoting or setting apart of an apostle to his office is expressed by the consecration of him to it; and in one part of the New Testament, even by the sanctifying of him to it. This explains a passage that might be otherwise difficult, John xvii. 17-19—“Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” To sanctify is not applied here to the personal but the official character: it is not to moralize the heart but merely to set apart to an employment, and thus bears application to the apostle Christ, as to the apostles whom He was addressing.

‘Gospel’—a message of good news.

Ver. 2.—“Which He had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures.”

‘Which’ refers to ‘gospel’—which gospel He had promised.

Ver. 3.—“Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh.”

This verse gives us the subject of the message, or what the message is about—or, omitting the second verse as a parenthesis, ‘separated unto the work of promulgating God’s message of good news, about His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.’ The phrase ‘which was made’ might have been rendered ‘which became’ of the seed of David in respect of His flesh, or His human nature. He took it upon Him. He received from this descent all that other men receive of natural faculty; or, in other words, the term ‘flesh’ comprehends the human soul as well as the human body of our Redeemer. ‘According to’ is ‘in respect of.’

Ver. 4.—“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

‘Declared’ or determinately marked out to be the Son of God, and with power. The thing was demonstrated by an evidence the exhibition of which required a putting forth of power, which Paul in another place represents as a very great and strenuous exertion: “According to the working of His mighty power when He raised Him from the dead.” ‘The Spirit of holiness’—or the Holy Spirit. It was through the operation of the Holy Spirit that the divine nature was infused into the human at the birth of Jesus Christ; and the very same agent, it is remarkable, was employed in the work of the resurrection. “Put to death in the flesh,” says Peter, “and quickened by the Spirit.” We have only to do with the facts of the case. He was demonstrated to be the Son of God by the power of the Spirit having been put forth in raising Him from the dead.

Ver. 5.—“By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for His name.”

‘Grace’ sometimes signifies the kindness which prompts a gift, and sometimes the gift itself. We say that we receive kindness from a man when, in fact, all that we can personally and bodily lay hold of is the fruit of his kindness. Here it signifies the fruit—a spiritual gift—ability, in fact, to discharge the office of an apostleship, or other duties attached to an apostle’s commission. He laboured with success at this vocation, because he could strive mightily according to His working that wrought in him mightily. This commission was granted to him for the purpose of producing an obedience unto the faith among all nations, for the purpose of rendering all nations obedient unto the faith—and all this for the further purpose of magnifying His name.

Ver. 6.—“Among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.”

‘Called’ externally—if addressing the whole Church, of whom it is very possible that some may not have been called effectually; or if restricted, as in the following verse, only the latter—though he might presume to address all in visible communion with the Church as beloved of God, and as called to be saints.

Ver. 7.—“To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” Lovingkindness to you is manifested in those peculiar influences which the Spirit confers on believers; and either real peace, or a sense of it in your hearts, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

So minute an exposition may not be called for afterwards : we shall not therefore persevere in it long. We have now gone in detail over the words that seemed to require it, to prepare the way for repeating the whole passage to you, either in extended or in substituted language. But before we do so, we would bid you remark a peculiarity which we often meet with in the compositions of this apostle. He deals very much in what might be called the excursive style. One word often suggests to him a train of digression from the main current of his argument ; and a single word of that train often suggests to him another ; and thus does he accumulate one subsequent clause of an episode upon a foregoing ; and branches out in so many successive departures, till, after a period of indulgence in this way of it, he recalls himself and falls in again to the capital stream of his observations. The interval between the first and seventh verses may be looked to as filled up with a set of parentheses, and they will read therefore very well in succession : ‘ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,—to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints : Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.’ In like manner, several of the intermediate verses are capable of being omitted without breaking the line of continuity. But the occurrence of the term ‘gospel’ at the end of the first verse, is followed up in the second by his mention of the antiquity of it ; and in the third by his mention of the subject of it ; and in this verse the single introduction of our Saviour’s name leads him to assert in this and the following verse His divine and human natures, and to state in the fifth verse that from Him he had received a commission to preach unto all nations, and to instance in the sixth verse the people whom he was addressing as one of these nations. And it is not till after he has completed this circle of deviations, but at the same time enriched the whole of its course with the effusions of a mind stored with the truths of Revelation, that he resumes in the seventh that rectilinear track by which the writer who announced himself in the first verse sends in the seventh his Christian salutations to the correspondents whom he is addressing.

We conclude with the following paraphrase :—

‘ Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, and set apart to the work of conveying God’s message of good tidings—which message He had promised before in His Holy

Scriptures, and which message relates to His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who in respect of His human nature, was descended of David, but was evinced to be descended of God in respect of that divine nature with which the Holy Spirit impregnated His humanity at the first ; and which He afterwards, by His power, still associated with His humanity, in raising Him from the dead. By this Jesus Christ have I received the favour to be an apostle, and ability for the office of spreading obedience unto the faith among all nations, for the glory of His name. Among these nations are ye Romans also the called of Jesus Christ, and to all of you in Rome, beloved of God, and called to be saints, do I wish grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

LECTURE III.

ROMANS I. 8-17.

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. I am a debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

It does not require much in the way of exposition to set forth the meaning of these verses. The spiritual gift, mentioned in the eleventh verse, is one of those gifts by the Holy Ghost which the apostles had it in their power to transmit to their disciples—a power which seems to have signalized them above all the Christians of that period. Many could speak tongues and work miracles, but they could not make others either speak tongues or work miracles. The gifts themselves it was competent for them to have, but not the faculty of communicating them. This seems to have been the peculiar prerogative of apostles—which Simon Magus desired to have, but could not purchase. It was thus, perhaps, that an apostolical visit was necessary for the introduction of these powers into any church or congregation of Christians; and if so, we would infer that the season of miracles must have passed away with those Christians who had been in personal contact with and were the immediate descendants of the apostles of our Lord. They left the gift of miracles behind them; but if they did not leave the power of transmitting this gift behind them, it might have disappeared with the dying away of all those men on whom they had actually laid their hands.

In the fourteenth verse, the phrase 'I am a debtor,' may be

turned into the phrase—‘I am bound’ or ‘I am under obligation,’ laid upon me by the duties of my office, to preach both to Greeks and Barbarians, both to the wise and the unwise. “Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel”—a necessity is laid upon me.

The only other phrase that requires explanation, and about which indeed there is a difference of interpretation, is in the seventeenth verse—‘from faith to faith.’ There is one sense assigned to this expression, very consistent certainly with the general truth of the gospel, but which can scarcely be admitted in this place, save by that kind of hurried acquiescence which is too often rendered on the part of those who like no better way of disposing of a passage than to get over it easily. The righteousness of God is certainly that in which He hath appointed us sinners to appear before Him, and which is the only righteousness that He will accept of at our hands, as our meritorious title to His favour and friendship. Now it is very true that this righteousness becomes ours wholly by faith, that by faith it is received on our part, and by faith it is retained on our part; and that neither works before faith, nor works after it, have any part in our justification; and that, therefore, it is not by passing onwards from faith to works that we further the concern of our justifying righteousness before God, but only by holding fast the beginning of our confidence even unto the end, and not casting it away; and if there be any lack in our faith, perfecting that which is lacking therein, so that the same may hold true of us as of the primitive Christians, of whom it was recorded that their faith groweth exceedingly. And with these views in their mind do some hold that the righteousness of God being ‘revealed from faith to faith’ signifies that as it is made known and discerned at first in the act of our believing, so the revelation of it becomes more distinct and manifest just as the faith becomes stronger—the things to be discerned being seen in greater brightness and evidence as the organ of discernment grows in clearness and power—not (so they would have it) from faith unto works, but from faith to faith—marking what is very true, that our righteousness before God, regarded as the giver of a perfect and incommutable law, is wholly by faith.

Notwithstanding, however, of all the undoubted truth and principle which stand associated with this interpretation, we think that there others more simple and obvious. Paul had already spoken of a transmission of faith from himself to those

whom he was addressing, and of a consequent mutual faith between himself and them; and he tells us elsewhere of faith coming by hearing, and asks, how can people believe unless preachers be sent? and he announces his determination to preach the gospel to those who are in Rome also; and professes his own faith in the gospel, under the affirmation that he is not ashamed of it; and declares its great subject to be the righteousness of God, revealed, as some are disposed to understand it, from the faith of the preacher to the faith of the hearers. Others would have it to mean that this righteousness is revealed by the faithfulness of God to the faith of men.

But to our mind the best interpretation is obtained by conjoining the term 'righteousness' with the phrase in question. For therein is revealed, the righteousness of God from faith, to faith. We shall thus have revealed in the gospel *δικαιοσύνη ἐκ πίστεως*, which is the righteousness from of or by faith; and the gift of which is *εἰς πίστιν*, or to faith. This is quite at one with the affirmation of a subsequent passage, that "the righteousness which is by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all that believe," or the righteousness which is by faith is unto those who have the faith: as it is written, The righteous live, or hold that life which was forfeited under the law and is restored to them under the gospel, by faith.

We now offer the following paraphrase:—

'First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is in the mouths of all. For God, whom I serve with my whole heart in the business that He has committed to me of forwarding His Son's gospel, can testify that I never cease to make mention of you in all my prayers—making request, if it now be possible in any way, that I may at length, after unlooked for delay, have with His will a prosperous journey to you at Rome; for I long to see you, that I may in person and as a sign of my apostleship impart to you some gift of the Holy Ghost, in order to confirm your minds in the faith of this gospel. Or rather, that I may be comforted, as well as you be confirmed, by the exercises and the sympathies of our mutual faith. Now you must know, brethren, that it has been long my purpose to come to you, but have hitherto been prevented, that I might have some effects of my ministry among you also, even as among the other nations where I have laboured. I have not yet visited the seat of philosophy, nor come into contact with its refined and literary people; but I count myself as much bound to declare the gospel

to Greeks, or to men of Attic cultivation and acquirement, as to rude and ignorant barbarians—as much to the learned in this world's wisdom as to the unlearned. So that, as far as it lies with me, I am quite in readiness to preach the gospel even to you who are at Rome; for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ—and in the work of declaring it am as ready to face the contempt and the self-sufficiency of science, as to go round with it among those more docile and acquiescing tribes of our species who have less of fancied wisdom in themselves with which to confront it. For it is the power of God unto the salvation of all who believe. It is that to which, however judged and despised as a weak instrument by the men of this world—it is that to which He by His power gives effect for the recovery of that life which all men had forfeited and lost by sin, and which can only be restored by a righteousness which will do away the whole effect of this sin. Whosoever believeth in the gospel shall be saved, by having this life rendered back to him, whether he be Jew or Greek; for the gospel makes known the righteousness appointed by God—a righteousness by faith, and which is unto all who have faith; as it is written that the righteous—and those only are so who have that righteousness which God will accept—have it unto spiritual life here, and unto eternal life hereafter, by faith.

It will not be our general practice to embarrass you with many interpretations of the same passage; and we do it at present only for the purpose of ushering in the following observation. There do occur a few ambiguous phrases in Scripture; and this is quite consistent with such a state of revelation there, as that the great and essential truths which are unto salvation shall stand as clearly and as legibly on the face of the evangelical record as if written with a sunbeam. And whereas there may enter into your minds a feeling of insecurity when you behold men of scholarship at variance about the meaning of one of those doubtful expressions, we call you to remark how much the controversy between them is, in many instances, restricted merely to what the subject of the expression is, and not to what the doctrine of the Bible is upon that subject. Thus controversialists may all be at one about the scriptural doctrine on every given topic, though they may not be at one as to the question—what is the topic which in this particular clause is here adverted to? The first class of interpreters, about the meaning of the ambiguous phrase in the seventeenth verse of this chapter, may think

that it relates to the doctrine of our justification being wholly of faith, and that it retains this as its alone footing throughout the whole course of an advanced Christian, as he makes progress both in faith and in the works of righteousness; and they may not think that it relates to the topic assigned either by the second or third class of interpreters; and yet they may be entirely at one with both in the judgment and understanding they have on each of the topics—concurring with the second in the general truth that a frequent and established way for the propagation of faith in the world is by its passing from him who speaks to him who listens, and who in the act of listening becomes a believer—and concurring also with the third in their general principle, that the righteousness appointed by God for a sinner to appear with in His presence, is constituted not by working but by believing, and that it is transferred as a possession unto all who believe. They, one and all of them, may have the same mind upon the same topics, because shone upon in the same way by the light of many other express and undoubted testimonies about these topics which lie up and down in the Bible; and the only question of disputation between them may be, which of these particular topics happens to be the theme of the apostle in the passage before us—a very subordinate question, you will observe, to that more vital and essential one which relates to the meaning of an article of faith—a question about which there may be varieties of sentiment among men who are substantially at one in all that relates to the doctrines of Christianity. And we think that it ought to quell your apprehensions, and to reduce the estimate you may have previously made of those controversies among good men, which some would represent as quite endless and inextricable, when you are thus made to understand that in a very great number of cases they refer not to what the whole amount of the Bible testimony is about this one or that other portion of the theological creed, but to what the position is which is specially taken up or adverted to in some of the incidental or subordinate passages. There is nothing to alarm or to unsettle in those lesser diversities which we are now alluding to. Nay, it ought rather to establish your confidence when you see that these diversities are held by the very men who hold the great principles of Christianity in common—by men who, in thus dissenting from each other on particular passages, evince that to each of them there belongs the habit of independent thinking, and who thus stamp the value of so many distinct and independent testimonies

on those great doctrines which they have received from the light of many passages, and by which they are united in the profession of one Faith, and one Lord, and one Baptism.

A controversy about the doctrine of a particular passage is one thing, and a controversy about the truth of a particular doctrine is another. The one implies a difference of understanding about the sense of one passage; the other may imply a difference of understanding about the general voice and testimony of Scripture as made up of many passages.

Let us now pass on from our exposition of the meaning of words to our application of the matter that is conveyed by them. And here we have only time to advert to the affection and the strenuousness with which the apostolic mind of Paul gave itself up to apostolic business—how he rebukes by his example those who make the work of winning souls to Christ a light and superficial concern—how his whole man seems to have been engrossed by it—making it a matter of gratitude when he heard of its prosperity—making it a matter of prayer when he desired its furtherance—making it a matter of active personal exertion when it required his presence or his labour. To this work he gave himself wholly; and, by adding prayer to the ministry of the word, teaches us how much the effect of this ministry is due to those special influences which are called down from Heaven by the urgency of special applications sent up from believers in the world. There is one trait of his mind which frequently breaks out in his communications with his own converts. He is sometimes obliged to affirm his apostolic superiority over them, or to say something which implies it. But it is evident how much he recoils from such an assumption, and how it sets him to the expressions and the expedients of delicacy, with a view to soften the disparity between himself and his disciples; and how he likes to address them in the terms of equal and friendly companionship, dropping upon all possible occasions the character of the teacher in that of the fellow-Christian; and never feeling so comfortable in his intercourse with them as when he places himself on the level of their common hopes, and common sympathies, and common infirmities. It is altogether, we apprehend, such a movement of humility on the part of Paul that lies at the transition from the eleventh verse, which signalizes him above the whole Church, to the twelfth, which brings him down to a participation of the same faith and the same comfort with them all.

We shall not at present bring forth any remark on a phrase which occurs frequently in this epistle—‘the righteousness of God,’ for we shall have a freer and fuller opportunity of doing so afterwards. But let us not pass over the intrepidity of Paul in the open and public avowal of his Christianity. We call it intrepidity, though he speaks not here of having to encounter violence, but only of having to encounter shame; for, in truth, it is often a higher effort and evidence of intrepidity to front disgrace than it is to front danger. There is many a man who would march up to the cannon’s mouth for the honour of his country, yet would not face the laugh of his companions for the honour of his Saviour. We doubt not that there are individuals here present who, if a Turkish armada were wafted on the wings of conquest to our shores, and the ensigns of Mahomet were proudly to wave over the fallen faith of our ancestors, and they were plied with all the devices of Eastern cruelty to abjure the name of Christian, and do homage to the false prophet—there are individuals here whose courage would bear them in triumph through such a scene of persecuting violence, and yet whose courage fails them every day in the softer scenes of their social and domestic history. The man who under the excitements of a formal and furious persecution were brave enough to be a dying witness to the truth as it is in Jesus, crouches into all the timidity of silence under the omnipotence of fashion, and ashamed of the Saviour and His words, recoils in daily and familiar conversation from the avowals of a living witness for His name. There is as much of the truly heroic in not being ashamed of the profession of the gospel as in not being afraid of it. Paul was neither: and yet when we think of what he once was in literature, and how aware he must have been of the loftiness of its contempt for the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, and that in Rome the whole power and bitterness of its derisions were awaiting him, and that the main weapon with which he had to confront it was such an argument as looked to be foolishness to the wisdom of this world—we doubt not that the disdain inflicted by philosophy was naturally as formidable to the mind of this apostle as the death inflicted by the arm of bloody violence. So that even now and in an age when Christianity has no penalties and no proscriptions to keep her down, still, if all that deserves the name of Christianity be exploded from conversation—if a visible embarrassment run through a company when its piety or its doctrine is introduced among them—if among beings rapidly

moving towards immortality any serious allusion to the concerns of immortality stamps an oddity on the character of him who brings it forward—if through a tacit but firm compact which regulates the intercourse of this world, the gospel is as effectually banished from the ordinary converse of society as, by the edicts of tyranny, the profession of it was banished in the days of Claudius from Rome; then he who would walk in his Christian integrity among the men of this lukewarm and degenerate age—he who would do all and say all in the name of Jesus—he who in obedience to his Bible would season with grace and with that which is to the use of edifying the whole tenor of his communications—he in short who rising above that meagre and mitigated Christianity which is as remote as Paganism from the real Christianity of the New Testament, would, out of the abundance of his heart, without shrinking and without shame, speak of the things which pertain to the kingdom of God—he will find that there are trials still, which to some temperaments are as fierce and as fiery as any in the days of martyrdom; and that, however in some select and peculiar walk he may find a few to sympathize with him, yet many are the families and many are the circles of companionship where the persecution of contempt calls for determination as strenuous, and for firmness as manly, as ever, in the most intolerant ages of our Church, did the persecution of direct and personal violence.

And let it also be remarked that in becoming a Christian now the same transition is to be made from one style of sentiment to another which was made by the apostle. It is as much the effort of nature as it ever was of a corrupt and ignorant Judaism, to seek to establish a righteousness of its own; and in passing from a state of nature to that of grace, there must still be a renouncing of that righteousness, and a transference of our trust and of our entire dependence to another. Now, in the act of making that passage, there is also the very same encounter with this world's ridicule and observation which the apostle had to brave, and which on the strength of right and resolute principle the apostle overcame. The man who hopes to get to heaven by a good life, and who professes himself to be secure on the strength of his many virtues and his many decencies, and who dislikes both the mystery and the seriousness which stand associated with the doctrine of salvation by faith alone—such a man has no more Christianity than he may easily and familiarly show, and by sporting such sentiments, even among the most giddy and un-

thinking of this world's generations, he will neither disgrace himself by singularity, nor be resisted as the author of any invasion whatever on the general style and spirit of this world's companies. But should he pass from this condition, which is neither more nor less than that of a Pharisee in disguise, and, struck by a sense of spiritual nakedness, flee for refuge to another righteousness than his own, and seek for justification by faith—a privilege which is rendered to faith, and profess now that he hopes to get to heaven by the obedience unto death which has been rendered for him by the great Mediator—such a style of utterance as this would serve greatly more to peculiarize a man among the conversations of society, and these are the words of Christ of which he is greatly apt to be more ashamed. A temptation meets him here, which no doubt met the apostle when his Christianity first came to be known among those fellow-students who had been trained along with him at the feet of Gamaliel; and it is at that point, when for the Jewish principle of self-righteousness he adopts the evangelical principle of justification by faith—it is then that he becomes more an outcast than before from the toleration and the sympathy of unconverted men.

Let the same consideration uphold such that upheld the mind of the apostle. All that you possibly can do for the purpose of substantiating a claim upon Heaven is but the weakness of man idly straining after a salvation which he will miss. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; and however simple the expedient, the power and the promise of God are on the side of your obtaining salvation which will certainly be accomplished. The Syrian was affronted when told to dip himself in Jordan for the cure of his leprosy; and to many in like manner is it a subject of offence when told to wash out their sins in the blood of the atonement, calling on the name of the Lord. But the same power which gave efficacy to the one expedient gives efficacy to the other; and in such a way, too, as to invest that method of salvation which looks meanness and foolishness to the natural eye with the solemn, venerable, imposing character of God's asserted majesty, of God's proclaimed and vindicated righteousness.

And here let us remark the whole import of the term 'salvation.' The power of God in the achievement of it was put forth in something more than in bowing down the Divinity upon our world, and there causing it to sustain the burden of the world's atonement—in something more than the conflicts of the garden

or the agonies of the cross—in something more than the resurrection of the crucified Saviour from His tomb—in something more than the consequent expunging of every believer's name from the book of condemnation, and the inscribing of it in the book of life. There is a power put forth on the person of believers. There is the working of a mighty power to us-ward who believe. There is the achievement of a spiritual resurrection upon every one of them. By the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, the power of which is applied to every soul that has faith, there is a cleansing of that soul from its moral and spiritual leprosy. And hence a connexion between two things which to the world's eye looks incomprehensible—a connexion between faith, which it might be feared would have led to indolent security, on the one hand, and a most thorough substantial pervading reformation of heart and conduct on the other. The expedient does not appear a likely one to the eye of nature. But the power of God stamps an efficacy upon it; and He has multiplied in all ages of the Church the living examples of marked and illustrious virtue in the person of believers, and has held them forth to the world as trophies of the power of the gospel, and has put to silence the gainsayers, and afforded matter of glory to the friends of the truth, and upheld them in the principle and purpose not to be ashamed of it.

We conclude with that awful denunciation of the Saviour—“He who is ashamed of me before this evil and adulterous generation, of him will I be ashamed before my holy angels.”

In the last clause—‘the just shall live by faith,’ we are apt to conceive of justice as a personal and inherent attribute. In the original, the term for ‘just’ has the same root with the term for righteousness, and this strengthens our impression of the true meaning here, which is—that they who are righteous with the righteousness of God, mentioned in the same verse, and who in virtue of being so have a title and security for life, hold that life by faith.

LECTURE IV.

ROMANS I 18-24.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves."

THE word translated here 'to hold,' signifies not merely to hold, but to hold fast. Now this may be done for the purpose of keeping in secure possession that which you wish to retain. And so this is the word in that place where they who receive the word are said to "*keep* it, and bring forth fruit with patience;"¹ and where the Corinthians are praised by Paul because they observed "to remember him in all things, and to *keep* the ordinances which he had delivered them;"² and where he tells them that they are saved if they "*keep* in memory that which he had preached unto them;"³ and where he bids the Thessalonians "*hold fast* that which is good;"⁴ and where he informs the Hebrews, that Christ dwelleth in them, if they "*hold fast* the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end;"⁵ and also that we are made partakers of Christ, if "we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;"⁶ and finally, where he encourages them to "hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering."⁷ It is not in the sense of the word in any of these passages that we are to understand it here. They who hold the truth in unrighteousness do not hold it for the sake of keeping it in possession as an article which they value, and therefore are desirous of retaining in safe and cherished custody.

One may also hold fast for the purpose of confining or keeping

¹ Luke viii. 15.

² 1 Cor. xi. 2.

³ 1 Cor. xv. 2.

⁴ 1 Thess. v. 21.

⁵ Heb. iii. 6.

⁶ Heb. iii. 14.

⁷ Heb. x. 23.

down, so as to impede and repress that which is thus confined from the putting forth of its energies. And accordingly this is the very word which Paul uses, when he says to the Thessalonians, "And now ye know what *withholdeth*, that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now *letteth* will let, until he be taken out of the way."¹ He alludes to something that so confined Antichrist as to keep him back, so that he came not out into full and immediate manifestation. It is in this second sense that men hold the truth in unrighteousness. They have the truth, they are in possession of it; but they keep it down. They chain it, as it were, in the prisonhold of their own corruptions. They throw the troublesome adviser into a dungeon, just like a man who has a conscience to inform him of what is right, but who stifles its voice and brings it under bondage to the domineering ascendancy of passion and selfishness, and all the lawless appetites of his nature. Thus it is with men who restrain the truth, or suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

Ver. 19.—'That which is knowable of God is manifest among them.'

Ver. 20.—'For ever since the creation of the world, that great manifestation of God's power and Godhead, these invisible things of Him are clearly seen.'

Ver. 21.—'In their reasonings.'

The following then is the paraphrase of this passage:—'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who stifle the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which might be known of God is manifest among them, for God hath shown it to them. For the invisible things respecting Him, even His eternal power and Godhead, are clearly seen, being discernible from the things that are made, so as to render them inexcusable. Because when they did know God they did not do Him glory as to God, neither were they thankful to Him; but departing from the grave, and solemn, and simple reliance that was due to the Creator, they went into vain reasonings about Him, and so changed the truth into a deceitful imagination, and their foolish heart was darkened. In the profession and in the prosecution of wisdom, they became fools: and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.'

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 6, 7.

Our first remark on the subject-matter of this passage is founded on the way in which the revelation of the righteousness of God unto faith stands as a counterpart to the revelation of the wrath of God unto all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The wrath is not an element framed or fermented upon earth. It is conceived in heaven; and thence it cometh down on the unrighteousness of men as the subject of it. And as with the wrath of God, so it is with the righteousness of God; it also cometh down from heaven in the shape of a descending ministration. It is no more the righteousness of man in the one case than it is the wrath of man in the other. It is affirmed here, and most prominently referred to in other parts of the epistle, as the righteousness of God. The wrath has its origin in the breast of the Divinity; and it goeth forth from an upper storehouse, from a quarter above our world and foreign to our world; and all that the world furnishes is the reservoir into which it is poured—the unrighteousness and the ungodliness of men, which form the fit subjects for its application. And there is not an individual man who is not a fit subject of it. The wrath is unto all unrighteousness; and there is none who has not fallen into some unrighteousness. All who do these things are worthy of death; and there is not a human creature who has not done one or more of these things.

But there is a way, it would appear, in which they who are thought worthy of death and are under the wrath of God, may nevertheless be made to live. They die by the wrath of God being inflicted on them; they live by the righteousness of God being administered to them. The one is just as much the rendering of a foreign application as the other. In the one case there is a displacency at sin on the part of the Godhead; and this bodies itself into a purpose of vengeance against the sinner, and the infliction of it is sent forth from God's remote and lofty sanctuary, originating there, and coming down from thence upon the unrighteousness of man. And as with the wrath of God ministered unto the world, so it is with the righteousness of God which is ministered unto the world. It has all a separate existence in the upper courts of heaven. It is no more man's righteousness in the one case than it is man's wrath in the other. There was a ransom found out by God; there was a surety accepted by God; there was a satisfaction which that surety rendered; there was an obedience undertaken for us by one who inhabited eternity—and with this obedience God was well

pleased; there was a righteousness which He could acknowledge; there was a duteous and devoted offering which to Him was the incense of a sweet-smelling savour; there was a virtue which shone in spotless lustre even to His pure and penetrating eye; and a merit which not only met the demand of His holy law, but magnified that law and made it honourable;—and all this apart from any obedience of ours,—all this the produce of a transaction in which we had no share; all this a treasure existing in the repositories of that place where the Father and the Son hold their ineffable communion—a righteousness not rendered by us, but rendered to us, and which is the only one that God can look unto with complacency. This is the righteousness of God, standing altogether aloof and separable from the righteousness of man; and which He offers to administer to us all, in place of that wrath which upon our refusal of His better offer He will administer. And the way in which both the wrath and the righteousness are set before us in this passage, as being each of them a descending ministration—the one of them being as purely a dispensation from Heaven as the other—should prepare us for the still more pointed asseverations of the apostle, when he tells us that the righteousness upon which we are accepted is altogether of God, and borrows not one particle of its worth from the obedience of man; that it comes upon us in the shape of a previous and a prepared grant, which we are simply to lay hold of; that we are not the authors of it, but simply the subjects of it. And much is to be gathered from the information, that like as the wrath of God is unto man's unrighteousness, so the righteousness of God is unto man's faith.

The question is—Whether that thing on which we are justified is the righteousness of Christ alone, accepted by God, and therefore called the righteousness of God, and rendered ours upon our receiving it by faith?—or, Whether it be the righteousness of man as alone or in part the plea of man's justification? It will be found in the sequel how strenuously and how unreservedly the apostle cleaves to the former term of this alternative; and in this opening passage of his Epistle does he afford us no obscure or unsatisfying glimpse of that doctrine on which lie suspended the firmest securities of our peace in this world, and the dearest hopes of our eternity.

The next thing to which we direct your attention is the precise reason that is intimated to us here of God's provocation with man. There is something in the principle of His anger which

accords with what we experience of the movement of anger in our own bosoms. An infant or an animal may do an action which is materially wrong without calling forth our resentment. It is the knowing it to be wrong, on the part of the doer, which is indispensable to our anger against him being a rightful emotion; and it is neither the acting nor the thinking erroneously, on the part of men, which in itself brings down upon them the wrath of God. It is their doing so intelligently; it is their stifling the remonstrances of truth in the work of unrighteousness; it is that they voluntarily bid it into silence; and bent on the iniquity that they love, do in the wilful prosecution of it drown its inward voice, just as they would deafen the friendly warning of any monitor who is standing beside them, and whose advice they guess would be on the side of what is right, and against the side of their own inclinations. Were there no light present to their minds there would be no culpability. On the other hand, should it shine clearly upon them, this makes them responsible for every act of disobedience to its lessons. But more, should it shine but dimly, and it be a dimness of their own bringing on; should they land in a state of darkness, and that not because any outward luminary has been extinguished, but because, in hatred of its beams and loving the darkness, they have shut their eyes; or should it be a candle within which has waned and withered to the very border of extinction, under their own desirous endeavours to mar the brilliancy of its flame; should there be a law of our nature, in virtue of which every deed of opposition to the conscience causes it to speak more faintly than before, and to shine more feebly than before—and should this be the law which has conducted every human being on the face of our earth to the uttermost depths, both of moral blindness and moral apathy—still he is what he is because he willed against the light, and wrought against the light. It is this which brings a direct criminality upon his person; it is this which constitutes a clear principle for his condemnation to rest upon; and it is enough to fasten blame-worthiness upon his doings, that they were either done in despite of the convictions which he had, or done in despite of the convictions which but for his own wilful depravity he might have had.

The Bible in charging any individual with actual sin always presupposes a knowledge—either presently possessed, or unworthily lost, or still attainable on his part—of some rightful authority against which he hath done some act of wilful defi-

ance. The contact of light with the mind of the transgressor, and that too in such sufficiency as—if he had followed it—would have guided him to an action different from the one he has performed, is essential to the sinfulness of that action, inasmuch that on the day of reckoning, when the men of all nations and all ages shall stand around the judgment-seat, there is not one who will be pronounced an outcast of condemnation there who will not feel an echo in his own conscience to the righteousness of the sentence under which he has fallen; and who, though living in the midst of thickest heathenism, will not remember the visitations of a light which he ought to have followed, and by resisting which he has personally deserved the displeasure of God that shall then be over him—the doom of the eternity that shall then be before him.

In the nineteenth and following verses, the apostle—aware that to establish the guilt of the world's unrighteousness it was necessary to prove that it was unrighteousness committed in the face of knowledge—affirms what it was that man knew originally, and how it was that the light which was at one time in them became darkness. That which it was competent to know about God was manifest among men. God Himself had showed it unto men. He had either done so by the wisdom that shone in creation, making it plain to man's natural discernment that it was the product of a supreme and eternal intelligence—and this is one way in which we may understand how the invisible properties of the Godhead are clearly seen even from the impress of them stamped and evident to the reflecting eye on the face of Creation itself—or He had expressly revealed the fact to men that the world was created, and that He was the Author of it. Instead of leaving them to find this out, He had made it known to them by actual communication. It is not necessary to conceive from these verses that the doctrines of the existence and perfections of God are the achievements of man's unaided discovery at the first. In that age of extraordinary manifestations, when God put forth the arm of a Creator, He may also have put forth the voice of a Revealer, and simply announced to men that the world they lived in was a workmanship, and that He Himself was the builder and the maker of it. With the simple information that the world made not itself but had a beginning, they could rise to the perception of Him who had no beginning. They could infer the eternity of that Being who Himself was uncreated. They could infer the magnitude of His power, see-

ing it to be commensurate to the production of that stupendous mechanism which lay visibly around them. They could infer His Godhead, or in other words His supremacy—the subordination of all that existed to His purpose and will, His right of property in this universe, and in all those manifold riches which fill and which adorn it; and more particularly, that He originated all their faculties, that He provided them with all their enjoyments, that every secondary source and agent of gratification to them was a mere channel of conveyance for His liberality, that behind all which was visible there were a power and a Godhead invisible which had been from eternity, and were now put forth in bright and beautiful development on a created expanse, where everything was that could regale the senses and be exuberant of delight and blessedness to the living creatures by whom it was occupied.

It is not necessary to enter into a contest about the powers or the limits of the human faculties: though we shall afterwards attempt to make it evident that debased and darkened as we are by sin, there is enough of light in the human conscience to render inexcusable human ungodliness. But let us at present confine ourselves to the circumstances adverted to by the apostle, according to the historical truth of them. He is evidently describing the historical progress of human degeneracy, and begins with the state of matters at the commencement of a darkening and deteriorating process which took place on the character of man. And without resolving the metaphysical question—How far man without a direct communication from heaven could have found his way to the being and attributes of the Divinity?—let us just take up with the commencement of matters as it actually stood. It was a period of extraordinary manifestations; and God made Himself directly and personally known as the one Creator of all things; and men had only to look with the eye of their senses to these things, and to conclude how much of power, how much of wisdom, how much of rightful sovereignty and ownership belonged to Him that framed all and upholds all. We may not be sure in how far man could on the strength of his own unborrowed resources have steered his ascending way to the knowledge of a God. But the communicated fact that God did exist, and that He was the framer and the architect of all, put him on high vantage ground, from which might be clearly seen the eternal power of the Supreme and His eternal Godhead.

We have only time to advert shortly to the way in which the truth respecting God was changed into a lie. The creature became more loved and more depended on than the Creator. He was not glorified as the Giver and the Maker of all created good. But what was sensibly and immediately good was sought after for itself, was valued on its own account, was enjoyed without any thankful reference to Him who granted all and originated all; and this too in the face of a distinct knowledge that everything was held of God—in the face of an authoritative voice claiming what was due to God—in the face of a conscience powerful at the outset of man's history, however much it may have been darkened and overborne in the subsequent process of his alienation. And thus the tenure of his earthly enjoyments was gradually lost sight of altogether; and the urgencies of sense and of the world got the better of all impressions of the Deity; and man at length felt his portion and his security and his all to be not in the Author of Creation, but in the creation itself with all its gay and goodly and fascinating varieties. His mind lost its hold of a great and subordinating principle, by which he could have assigned its right place and viewed according to its just relationship all that was around him. The world in fact—by a mighty deed of usurpation—dethroned the Deity from the ascendancy which belonged to Him, and thus the rule of estimation was subverted within him, and his foolish heart was darkened. This disorder in the state of his affections, while it clouded and subverted his discerning faculties, did not at the same time restrain the exercise of them. The first ages of the world, as is evident from the history of Babel, were ages of ambitious speculation; and man, with his love strongly devoted to the things of sense, still dreamed and imagined and theorized about hidden principles; and with his sense of the one presiding Divinity nearly obliterated, he began to fancy a distinct agency in each distinct element and department of nature, and—to make use of the strong phrases of God giving them up and giving them over—we may infer a law of connexion between a distempered state of the heart and a distempered state of the understanding; and thus their very wisdom was turned into folly, and to their perverted eye the world was turned into one vast theatre of idolatry, and they personified all that they loved and all that they feared, till, by the affections and the judgment acting and reacting the one upon the other, they sank down into the degrading fooleries of Paganism.

LECTURE V.

ROMANS I. 28.

“ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.”

BEFORE proceeding to enforce the lesson that may be educed from this text, let us shortly remark, that the not liking to retain God in our knowledge might have been rendered by the not trying to do so—not exercising our minds on the proof and information that were before them, so as to fix the right belief about God, and to perpetuate the right view and perception of Him. At the same time it is very true that not to try the evidence and not to prosecute the guidance of the light which we have about any doctrine, argues either a dislike to that doctrine or an indifference about it, so that any slight amendment which may be made of the English translation upon this score does not affect the truth which it here sets before us, that God gives over to a reprobate mind those who do not like to retain Him in their knowledge.

But the term ‘reprobate’ also admits of some little remark in the way of explanation. In its prevailing acceptation it suggests to our minds a hopeless and abandoned wickedness of character, and so is expressive of a diseased state of the moral principles. In its primary sense it was equivalent to the term ‘undiscerning’ or ‘undistinguishing,’ and so is expressive of a darkened state of the understanding. In your larger Bibles you will find a ‘reprobate mind’ rendered on the margin into a mind void of judgment. But still it is judgment, not exercised on any secular or philosophical question, but the judgment of what is moral and spiritual—that kind of judgment where error leads necessarily and immediately to practical unrighteousness, and where therefore the love of the unrighteousness disposes us to prefer the darkness rather than the light. It is thus that the understanding and the affections act and react upon each other, and that we read of men of corrupt minds having no judgment, or being reprobate concerning the faith; and of those who are

abominable and disobedient being also void of judgment about every good work, or unto every good work being reprobate.

In the sad narrative of the apostle in this chapter, he appears to refer not to the history of one individual mind, or of one individual conscience—the defilement of which two provinces in our moral and intellectual nature goes on contemporaneously with every human being who is in a state of progressive corruption; but he rather sketches out to us in this chapter the progress of the world's degeneracy from one age to another, and we would infer from his account, that men in the first instance had a far more clear and convinced sense of God, but not liking to retain it, committed the sin of a perverse disposition against the light which they had, and in part extinguished it; that they of course left own immediate posterity in a light more shaded and reduced than that which shone around the outset of their own progress through the world; that these still disliked the remainder of truth which they enjoyed, and by their wilful resistance to its lessons inflicted upon it a further mutilation, and transmitted it to their descendants with a still deeper due of obscurity thrown over it; that thus by every successive step from one generation to another, the light of divine truth went down in this world's history more tarnished and impaired than ever; but still with such glimpses as—however feeble and however faded—were enough at least to try the affection of man towards it, were enough to stir up a distinct resistance on the part of those who disliked it, were enough to keep up the responsibility of the world, and to retain it in rightful dependence on the judgment of Him who made the world, so as to make it clear on the day of reckoning, that men even in their state of most sunken alienation from the true God, were never like the beasts that perish, so helplessly blind and so destitute of all capacity for discerning between the good and the evil, as to render them the unfit subjects of a moral sentence and a moral examination. With every human creature who shall be pronounced worthy of death on that day, will it be seen that there was either a light which he actually had and liked not to retain, or a light which he might have had and liked not to recover. To whom much is given, of him much shall be required: and there will be gradations of punishment in hell; and in that place where the retributions of vengeance are administered, will there be the infliction of many stripes upon some, and of few stripes upon others; and it will be more tolerable for those who lived in darkness that

was not wilfully of their own bringing on, than for those who stood on the ground of rebellion amid the full blaze and effulgency of light from Heaven. Yet still there shall not be one unhappy outcast in that abode of eternal condemnation who will not be convicted of sin knowing it to be so ; who, whatever be the age or country of the world which he occupied, has not been plied with admonitions which he resisted, and urged by such an authoritative sense of duty as he trampled upon—and that too in the spirit of a daring and presumptuous defiance. In short, be his ignorance what it may, there was a wilful depravity which went beyond the limits of his ignorance : be that region of human affairs over which he roamed in utter darkness as extended as it may, still there was a region of light upon which he made his intrusions with the intelligent purpose and in the determined spirit of a rebel : let the moral geography of the place he occupied be as remote as it may, still there was a Law, the voice of which at times did reach him, and the sanctions of which must, when time is no more, at length overtake him : let the darkening of his foolish heart be as due as it may to the sin of his ancestors, they still left a tribunal there from which went forth upon him the whisper of many an intimation : in the darkest period of this world's abandonment, were there still the vestiges of truth before every eye, and a conscience awake in every bosom, insomuch that not one trembling culprit will be seen before the judgment-seat who will not stand self-convicted under the voice of a challenging and inspecting Deity : his own heart will bear witness to the sentence that has gone forth against him, and the echoing voice of his own memory will be to him the knell of his righteous and everlasting condemnation.

But we should like to bring the principle of our text more distinctly and individually to bear upon you. That process in general history, by which the decline of this world's light respecting God and the decline of its practical allegiance to His authority have kept pace the one with the other, is often realized in the personal history of a single individual.

There is a connexion by the law of man's nature between his wilful disobedience and his spiritual darkness. You have read perhaps in our old theologians of what they called a judicial blindness. It is a visitation consequent upon sin. It is a withdrawal of the Spirit of God when grieved and discouraged and provoked by our resistance to His warnings. It is that Spirit ceasing to strive with the children of men ; and coming

to this—as the final result of the contest He has so long maintained with their obstinacy—that He shall let them alone since they will have it so. It is an extinction of the light which they once had—but refused to be led by ; and now perhaps that they have it not may they do many an evil thing to the evil of which they are profoundly asleep, and against which their conscience, now lulled and stifled into spiritual death, lifts no voice of remonstrance whatever. The guilt of sins committed in this state of dormancy, which is of their own bringing on, is no more done away by their insensibility to the foulness of them, than is the guilt of murder committed in the fury of wilful intoxication. And ye depraved and hackneyed old, at the doors of whose hearts we have so often knocked and knocked in vain, we bid you remember a season of alarm and tenderness which has now passed away ; we ask of you to look back on the prayers and the precautions of boyhood, when—the conscience awake and at her post—you at one time trembled to think of that which you can now do without remorse and without fearfulness. Ye men who have become stout-hearted sinners—and just because the moral light which once shone upon you has been extinguished by yourselves, and by yourselves your foolish hearts have been darkened—the scruples and the sensibilities of your earlier days may all have taken their departure, and such may be the lethargy of your souls that neither the thunders of the law nor the entreaties of the gospel can move them—you may now be able to stand your ground against all the spiritual artillery of the pulpit, and even though death has stalked at large over the entire field of your former companionship, and left you a solitary and surviving memorial of friends and of families that have all been swept away, still may you persist in the spirit of an unbroken worldliness, and act the secure and stout-hearted sinner who rivets all his desires and all his hopes on a slippery foundation. It is true, indeed, that with a conscience obliterated and an inner man deaf to every awakening call, and a system of moral feelings like a piece of worn and rusty mechanism that cannot be set agoing, and an overhanging torpor upon all the spiritual faculties, so that every denunciation of an angry God and a coming vengeance is only heard like a sound that whistles by ; it is indeed true that he whose soul is in a condition such as this sits in the region and in the shadow of grossest darkness. But it is not like the transmitted darkness of Paganism, which he can offer to plead in mitigation, or which will make his last sentence more tolerable for him, even as it

shall be more tolerable for Sodom or Gomorrah,—it is a darkness which he loved, and into which he voluntarily entered. He made his escape to it from the light which he hated ; and by his own act did he so outrun his pursuing conscience as now to be at a distance from her warnings. If the call of ‘repent or perish’ do not bring him back, it is because he is sealed unto the day of condemnation ; it is because God hath given him over to a reprobate mind ; it is because he is judicially in a state of blindness ; it is because his soul is compassed with a thick and heavy atmosphere of his own gathering. The Heathen sinner will be tried by the light which he had. The Christian sinner will be tried by the light which he fled from. This is his condemnation, that light has come into his part of the world, and he would not come to meet and be enlightened by it. He is on a footing altogether different from that of the idolater, though the darkness in which he is enveloped be irrecoverable. Enough that a light was offered which he refused—or enough that a light was once possessed and he did not like to retain it.

We have already remarked, that in the gradual darkening and deterioration of our world from one age to another, each age became successively more ignorant of God than the preceding ; and yet with each we believe, even in the veriest wilds of savage and untaught humanity, is there enough of light, and enough of conscience, and enough of God’s law in dim but remaining vestiges, to make every individual of our species a fit subject for moral examination, and for a righteous sentence consequent upon a fair and impartial trial. Now we have not practically to do with the destinies of the unconverted Heathen, nor shall we just now enter upon this region of speculation at all ; but we have immediately to do with a question which respects the immortality of our own countrymen.—What is their light, and what is the degree of their condemnation if they resist it ? What is the precise addition which our possession of the Bible has conferred upon our responsibility ? What is the knowledge of God to which a conscientious and diligent perusal of this book might conduct us, unless we like not to receive that knowledge which we might obtain ? What is the knowledge of God which we throw away from us by throwing this book away from us, and that because we like not to retain the knowledge which we might possess ? Only grant that we are as morally and as rightfully to blame for not acquiring the light which we might receive if we had so willed it, as for not preserving the light which we

might attain if we had so willed it, and the question before us is brought within a manageable compass. Is there at the very outset enough of likelihood that God might be the author of this Book as should resolve us upon a serious examination? Then if God actually be the author, we have not acquired the knowledge of Him we might have done, and we shall be condemned accordingly, if we withhold the examination which ought to have been given. Is there enough of the character of the Divinity stamped upon its pages, that had we only read with earnestness and pondered with earnestness we would have beheld the traces of Him distinctly there and have been satisfied? Then if instead of so reading we have wantonly and ignorantly reviled it, God may righteously step forth and vindicate upon our persons the truth of His insulted message and the honesty of His insulted messengers. If the suspicion has ever come into any of your hearts that this ridicule of Scripture may after all be a ridicule of the Almighty, and you, instead of being arrested by the impulse of such a visitation, have in the mad outcry of a great and growing infatuation, made your strenuous effort to keep down this compunctious feeling and have prevailed, then have you committed yourselves, and that wilfully, to the hazards of this alternative—that either the Scripture is a fable, or you by the choice of your own hearts and the deed of your own hands have come under all the curses that are written in it. Certain it is that to whatever term of whatever alternative the world may commit itself in reference to Christianity, Christianity commits itself to a very distinct alternative in reference to the world; and if this religion indeed be true, and such be the actual influence of the human will upon the human understanding, that he who is willing to do God's will shall know of the doctrine of Christ that it is from God; and if faith in the gospel be at all times the fruit of moral honesty, duly exercised and sincerely in quest of what is right; and if the spirit of direction be given to him who has an upright feeling of desire to do as he ought, and to believe as he ought; and if every man who faithfully follows the light of his conscience is thereby conducted to a reverence for his Bible and a reliance upon his Bible; and if infidelity be at all times the issuing product of a heart careless about God, and utterly unconcerned either to retain such knowledge of Him as it has, or to acquire such knowledge of Him as it has not—then it may not be in the power of a fellow-man, under all those guises of candour and frankness and liberality which the un-

believer can put on, so to feel his way through the intricacies of another's spirit as to catch the lurking criminality and bring it out in satisfying exposure to the general eye. But let Christianity be true, and mark the fearful alternative to him who spurns it away. The unseen author of it ponders every heart; and mysterious as its workings are to us, there is nothing in them all that can baffle the scrutiny of Him who formed it; and if there be, as the Bible says there is, an alliance between infidelity and moral evil, He can detect it and bring it out on the day of reckoning to open manifestation—He can unveil the whole process of this miserable delusion; and at any step of it where pride, or ungodliness, or selfishness, or profligacy did operate its bias upon the understanding, He can make it good, and that to the conviction of the unhappy man, that his judgment was in error just because his affections were in error—that there was a want of belief in his mind, just because there was a want of worth in his character—that he was not a Christian man, just because he was not an upright man—and that the light which was in him was turned into darkness, just because he did not care to retain it, and after it was lost he did not care and did not choose to recover it.

To satisfy you of a real connexion between the state of man's moral principles on the one hand, and the state of his intellectual principles on the other, let us have recourse to one simple illustration; for it does require to be explained. There is many an error in judgment which implies no worldliness of character whatever. A man may have a wrong opinion in matters of trade, or philosophy, or law, and this altogether unconnected with any wrong habit of the life, or any wrong and depraved habit of the affections; and might not he, in like manner, have a wrong opinion on a question of theology, and be so very far in the wrong as to think Christianity a fable, and all this without any moral perversity being the cause of his error? Might it not be a mere mistake of the understanding for which he lies under no responsibility at all at that bar where nothing is condemned that is not criminal? Where lies the greater fault of an error in a matter of speculation, and that because a man has a bad understanding, than of an error in a matter of sight, and that because a man has bad eyes? How is it that there is any connexion between sentiment and sin? And let our belief be as mistaken as it may, explain to us how it comes to be an affair of moral turpitude, and with what justice or upon what principles it can have the retribution of any moral vengeance awarded to it!

If any of you, the victim of helpless poverty, were suddenly translated into ease and affluence, and that through a ministration of liberality left at your door by the hand of some unknown benefactor—in reference to him, though utterly in the dark about his person, you may be guilty of the crime of ingratitude. To make no inquiry about him were ungrateful. To riot in the enjoyment of the gift without one thought of concern or curiosity about the giver, were both selfish and ungrateful. To be better pleased that you did not know and have no repayment of gratitude to make, is the very essence of ingratitude; and that too in reference to an individual whose person perhaps you never saw, and whose name perhaps you never heard. To sit at greater ease without the burden of obligation upon you to any known benefactor than you would do if he stood revealed to your apprehension and claimed the due return of affection or of service, this is decisive of a heart tainted with the sin of ingratitude. It is sin which keeps you from inquiring; and if carefully to inquire were certainly to find, it is sin which keeps you from discovering: you want the light, and just because you hate it. You have not the knowledge of the heart that pitied and the hand that aided you, because it is a knowledge you like not to acquire.

And thus it is that many is the man who is ignorant of God, and yet lies under the full guilt and burden of ungodliness. Many is the man who, with the world as his satisfying portion, never lifts one anxious inquiry after Him who made the world; and think you that his defective theology is as free of blame or condemnation as is the defective philosophy of him who never attempted the toils of scholarship? Tell, if here a want of understanding may not resolve itself into a want of principle? He does not know God; but he does not seek to know Him. His mistakes of conception regarding the Deity, or his total want of conception about Him, may be designed as mere errors of judgment, or as a mere blindness of the judgment. But it is the error and the blindness of one who wishes not to see: he grovels in ignorance, but it may be just because he grovels in corruption. He is so engrossed with the creature that he would like to be quit of a Creator. There may be an utter absence of light, and yet may he realize all the guilt of impiety. He may stand on the verge of atheism, or even be darkling within its limits, and yet his worthlessness have the very same element with the worthlessness of him before the eye of whose convic-

tion God stands fully manifested, and who places himself in known defiance to his understood and authoritative voice.

But let us recur again to our illustration. The unknown friend may wish to reveal himself to the man he has befriended : he may send a messenger with a letter to his door ; he may inscribe such evidences of authenticity there as would force conviction if the letter were but read ; he may specify the amount, and he may specify the particulars of the ministration which had been rendered, and that in such a way as to prove that he was the author of it. The bearer of the communication may have all the marks of honesty about him—yet this be not enough. He may tell a convenient story—yet this be not enough. There may be companions along with him of complexion as fair and creditable as his own to vouch for the accuracy of his statement—yet this be not enough. The last and most conclusive evidence may still be in reserve. It may lie in the substance of the written communication ; and not till he to whom it is addressed has opened it and read it may he come fully to recognise and verify his benefactor.

And yet to a soul of selfishness and ingratitude this might be an unwelcome intrusion. He may have no desire to know his benefactor, and have a dread or a dislike towards the revelation of his will, and he may spurn the messenger from his door, and he may refuse to open or to read the letter that has been offered to him ; and the best evidence that there was upon the question may never have been before his eyes—not because it did not exist, but because he refused to look at it. Nay, he might have read, but read in such a careless and hasty style of perusal that he did not attain to conviction, and just because he took no pains to be convinced. And who does not see that his want of right understanding resolves itself into a want of right principle, that there is a taint of moral perversity in the whole of this proceeding, that the sin of his judgment is the sin of his heart, and that unbelief—which many would screen from condemnation—is in his instance unbelief fostered by his own wilful depravity, and an unbelief for which he deserves to be execrated ?

And so may it be of Christianity. God may have sent a written communication to the world. And to every careful and desirous reader the evidence of His hand may be legibly inscribed upon it ; and he who is willing to do His will, may recognise in the doctrine of Christ the traces of the divinity which inspired it ; and the man on whose heart a weight of

conscientiousness lies may, by the dint of patience and of prayer, come to a full and rational assurance of its truth ; and just because reading and inquiring and attending the ordinances—and all under the impulse of a sense of duty—may he become a steadfast believer. But if careless about God he will be equally careless about any revelation that professes to have come from Him. The Bible may often solicit his eye, but still remain unopened and unused by him. That Book from whose pages—if explored with honesty and prayer—there might beam a celestial effulgency upon his understanding, may be held in neglect, or treated with insult and derision. For aught he knows it may be the record of the will of Him who ushered him into life, and ministers to him all its enjoyments. And if ever the thought of this possibility visited his heart, and he in the face of it joined in the infidel cry of those who deride and who disown it—then on another day may the remembrance of this visitation rise in judgment against him, and it be made clear to his own conscience, that in spurning the Bible from his door he braved the hazards of a contest with Omnipotence.

LECTURE VI.

ROMANS II. 1-12.

"Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest : for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself ; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering ; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God ; who will render to every man according to his deeds : to them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life : but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good ; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile : for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law : and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law."

BEFORE proceeding to the exposition of this chapter, it may be remarked of the concluding verse in the last chapter, that with all the blindness which the apostle charges on the heathen, and with all the dislike of retaining God in their knowledge which he ascribes to them, there was still one particular of this knowledge which they did retain. They still knew so much of God's judgment as to be conscious that what they were doing in the sinfulness and reprobacy of their minds was worthy of death. There was still a remainder of conscience about them, in virtue of which they felt that there was a sin and a condemnation which attached to their own persons. With all the obliteration which had come upon their moral faculties, there were still the traces of a law which they could obscurely read, and of a voice which faintly uttered itself in notes of disapprobation. They were conscious that all was not right about them, and had the impression of a Being greater than themselves, to whose account they were responsible ; and the idea of a reckoning and of a sentence were not altogether strange to their understandings. For still, in the most sunken ages of our decaying and deteriorating species, did each man carry about with him such a light

as—if he did not follow it—would render him a sinner, not against such principles as were altogether hidden, but against such principles as were partly known to him. And such vestiges of a natural sense about the right and the wrong may not only be gathered from the books of Pagan antiquity, but they may be still more satisfactorily educed from the converse that we hold in the present day with the living Paganism which still abounds in our world. We know not a more deeply interesting walk of observation than that which is prosecuted by modern missionaries, when they come into contact and communication with the men of a still unbroken country—when they make their lodgement on one of the remote and yet untravelled wilds of Paganism—when, after the interval of four thousand years from the dispersion of the great family of mankind, they go to one of its most widely diverging branches, and ascertain what of conscience or what of religious light has among them survived the lapse of so many generations—when they thus, as it were, knock at the door of nature left for ages to itself, and try if there yet be slumbering there any sense or intelligence which can at all respond to the message they have brought along with them. Nor do we know an evolution of the human heart which carries in it more of a big and an affecting interest than that on which philosophy has never cast an inquiring regard—even that among its dark and long unentered recesses there still subsists an undying voice, which owns the comfort and echoes back the truth of Christianity. Insomuch, that let missionaries go to the very extremity of our species, and speak of sin, and judgment, and condemnation, they do not speak in vocables unknown; and sweet to many a soul is the preacher's voice when he tells that unto them a Saviour is born; and out of the relics of even this deep and settled degeneracy can be gotten the materials of a satisfying demonstration; and thus in the very darkest places have converts multiplied, and Christian villages arisen, and the gospel been the savour of life unto life to the some who have embraced it, and been the savour of death unto death to the many who have declined it—all proving that a principle still existed in their bosoms, which if they followed would guide them to salvation, and which if they fled from would try them and find them to be guilty. Nor let us wonder, therefore, that the apostle, even when speaking of those who are given over to every abomination, should still affirm of them that they know the judgments of God. Even a remainder of that knowledge

which they liked not to retain still kept its hold upon their conscience, and gave them a responsibility which belongs not to the beasts that perish. Man, in short, throughout the whole of this world's peopled territory, has a law by which he may righteously be judged; and enough of it is still known and felt by his own conscience to make it out that for its violation he should be righteously condemned. So that dark as our conceptions may be of the present character and future fate of those who live under the shadow of heathenism, we may be sure that a clear and righteous principle of retribution will be applied to them all; and that they who shall be judged worthy of death on that day will be found to have committed such things as they themselves either knew or might have known to be worthy of it.

There is still another phrase in the verse which may require to be adverted to. It is there said of the people who committed things worthy of death, that they not only did the same, but had pleasure in them that did them. This last marks a higher and a more formed depravity than the direct commission of that which is evil. To be hurried along by the violence of passion into some deed of licentiousness, may consist with the state of a mind that feels its own degradation, and mourns over the infirmity of its purposes. But to look with connivance and delight on the sin of others, to have pleasure in their companionship, and to spirit them on in the ways of disobedience, after perhaps the urgency which prompted his own career of it has abated—this argues, not the subjection of one faculty to another, but the subjection of the whole man to sin, viewed as an object of full and formal approbation. This is a reprobacy of the mind to which the old are sometimes given over after they have run their course of dissipation. At the outset even of this lawless history, was there a struggling principle within them, which debated, and, for a time, parried off the question of indulgence; and after they entered on the transgressor's path, did they taste the bitterness of many a compunctious visitation. But under that hardening process which we have already explained, the conscience at length lost its tenderness, and all its pangs and all its remonstrances were forgotten; and from one year to another can the voluptuary—more abandoned than before—lift a louder and a louder defiance to the authority which at one time overawed him; but never perhaps does he betray such a fatal symptom of one who is indeed given over, as when age with all its ailing helplessness has at length overtaken him, and he can now only smile at the

remembrance of joys which he can no longer realize; and the young who assemble at his festive board are by him cheered forward on that way of destruction, to the end of which he is so fast hastening, and the poison of his own indelicacy spreads its vitiating influence over the unpractised guests who are around him. Depravity so unfeeling as this, which goes to augment its own votaries and its own victims, and to perpetuate a legacy in hell from one rebellious generation to another, was daily and currently exemplified in the manners of an age which has now passed by. And if in the progress of an external or fashionable reformation it now be nearly unknown, let the record of it at least serve to mark how even an individual conscience can wither in its possessor's bosom to the very margin of extinction, and how ere he leaves the world he can bequeath to it an increase of degeneracy, adding his own seductive testimony to all the other engines of corruption which are already at work in it—thus serving to explain, not merely how guilt is ever growing in power and ascendancy over the habits of an individual, but how it deepens and accumulates and rises into magnitude more appalling, along the line of the advancing history of our species.

Before entering upon the exposition of the verses which have now been read in your hearing, let it be remarked, that the special design of the writer of this epistle begins to open into clearer manifestation. The fact is, that it was written to the believers in Rome before he ever had made a personal appearance in that city. We know from the Book of Acts, that upon his arrival there, it was his first care to obtain an interview with the people of his own nation, and that, as his practice was in other places, he began his explanation of the gospel in the hearing of the Jews, and then turned himself also unto the Gentiles. Certain it is, that in this written communication, the main purport of the argument is to conciliate the Jews to the faith of the gospel. It is to make them understand, that in respect of their need of salvation they were on a footing just as helpless as that of the Gentiles—that a like sentence of wrath had gone out against both, and a like process of recovery was indispensable to both. For the accomplishment of this object, he makes, we apprehend, a very skilful approach to the Jewish understanding. Throughout the whole of his writings, in fact, do we see that he abounded in wise but honourable devices for the purpose of giving weight and acceptance to his reasonings. He was all things to all men, not to the extent of surrendering any particle

of truth to their prejudices, but to the extent of doing all that might be fairly or innocently done, for the purpose of softening and surprising them out of their prejudices. The picture which he draws in the first chapter is a picture of the Gentile world, and its most conspicuous lineaments are those of Gentile profligacy ; and in laying it before the eye of a Jewish observer, he in fact deals with him even as Nathan did with David, when he offered him a disguised representation of his own character, and turned the indignation which he had previously kindled in the bosom of the monarch upon his own head. For you will observe, that though the most prominent features of the apostolic sketch are drawn from the abominations and the excesses of Heathenism, there are others which are descriptive, not of any special but of that universal corruption which may be read and recognised on the person of every member of the human family. The common depravities of our race are made to enter into the enumeration along with those which are more monstrous and unnatural ; and the vices which are chargeable upon all are mixed up in the same catalogue with the vices which are chargeable upon some ; and the Jew, heedless of those traits of the description which may be fastened on himself, is thus caught, as it were, into an indignation which may be retorted back again upon his own character. It is thus that the apostle begins his second chapter much in the way in which the prophet of the Old Testament prosecuted the advantage that he had won over David, whose resentment he had kindled against an act of oppression which he himself had both imitated and outdone. "Thou art the man !" is reiterated upon the Jew throughout the whole of the second and the greater part of the third chapter—it being the main object of our apostle to assail the opposition in that quarter where it looked to be most impregnable—to extend the conviction of sin from the Gentile whom he had laid prostrate before him, to the Jew who still kept a boastful attitude on the ground of that self-sufficiency which the apostle labours to cut away—to prove, in short, that all were under sin, and all were in need of a Saviour ; that all were partakers of the same guilt, and must be partakers of the same grace, ere they could be restored to acceptance with that God whom in common they had all offended.

In order that you feel the force of the apostle's demonstration, there is one principle which is held to be sound in human law, and which in all equity ought to be extended to the law of God.

The principle is this :—that however manifold the enactments of the law may be, it is possible, by one act or one kind of disobedience, to incur the guilt of an entire defiance to the authority which framed it ; and therefore to bring rightfully down upon the head of the transgressor the whole weight of the severities which it denounces against the children of iniquity. To be worthy of death it is not necessary to commit all the things which are included in the sad enumeration of human vices, any more than it is necessary for a criminal to add depredation to forgery, or murder to both, ere a capital sentence go out against him from the administrators of the law upon which he has trampled. You may as effectually cut with a friend by one hostile or insolent expression as if you had employed a thousand ; and your disowning of an authority may be as intelligibly announced by one deed of defiance as by many, and your contempt of Heaven's court be as strongly manifested by your wilful violation of one of the commandments, as if you had thwarted every requirement of its prescribed and published ceremonial. It is true that there are gradations of punishment ; but these are measured not according to the multiplicity of outward offences but according to the intensity of the rebellious principle that is within. In virtue of an honourable feeling, you may never steal, and this is the deduction of one external iniquity from the history of the doings of the outer man, but it is not on that account an alleviation of the ungodliness of the inner man. You may have natural affection, and never abandon either a child to the exposure of its infancy, or a parent to the helplessness of his age, and yet your heart be as destitute as that of any of the inferior animals of affection for your Father who is in heaven. The man who has thrown off the allegiance of loyalty, may feel no inclination to walk the whole round of disobedience to the laws ; and yet upon the temptation of one single opportunity, and by the breaking forth of one single expression, may he bring down the whole vengeance of Government upon his person. The man who has thrown off the allegiance of Religion may neither have the occasion nor the wish to commit all the offences which it prohibits, or to utter all the blasphemies which may be vented forth in the spirit of defiance against the Almighty's throne, and yet the principle of defiance may have taken full possession of his heart, and irreligion may be the element in which he breathes. And in every instance, when his will comes into competition with the will of God, may the creature lift him-

self above the Creator ; and though, according to the varieties of natural temperament, these instances may be more manifold and various with one man than with another, yet that which essentially constitutes the character of moral and spiritual guilt may be of equal strength and inveteracy with both—making it as true of a reputable member of society in our day as it was of the formal and observant Pharisee, that he only conformed to the law of God when—though walking all the while in the counsel of his own heart—conformity is that which he would ; and always trampled upon this law whenever—walking in the same counsel—conformity is a thing which he would not. Ungodliness, in short, is not a thing of tale and measure : it is a thing of weight and of quality. It may be as thoroughly infused through the character of him who is observant of all the civilized decencies of life, as of him whose enormities have rendered him an outcast from all the common regards of society. Heaven's sanctuary is alike scorned and alike neglected by both, and on the head of each will there be the same descending burden of Heaven's righteous indignation.

Among the varieties both of taste and of habit which obtain with the different individuals of our species, there are modifications of disobedience agreeable to one class and disgusting to another class. The careful and calculating economist may never join in any of the excesses of dissipation ; and the man of regardless expenditure may never send an unrelieved petitioner from his door ; and the religious formalist may never omit either sermon or sacrament that is held throughout the year in the place of his attendance ; and the honourable merchant may never flinch or falsify in any one of the transactions of business ;—each has such points of conformity as suits him, and each has such other points of nonconformity as suits him ; and thus the one may despise or even execrate the other for that particular style of disobedience by which he indulges his own partialities ; and as to the things wherein they respectively do differ there can be no doubt as to the matter of them ; but as to the mind of unconcern about God which all of them express, they are virtually and essentially the same. So that amid the censure and contempt which so currently pass between men of various classes and characters in society, there is one pervading quality of ungodliness which they hold in common, and in virtue of which the condemnation that one pronounces upon another may righteously be turned upon himself ; and it be said of him in the language of

the apostle, 'Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things.'

ROMANS ii. 1-12.—This passage requires almost nothing in the way of verbal criticism. The term for 'despise,' in the fourth verse, needed not to have been so rendered as to denote an active contempt, but rather a mere disregard and negligence of the opportunity which God in His forbearance had afforded to sinners for returning and making their peace with Him. The term 'patient,' again, in the seventh verse, signifies, both here and in other places of Scripture, something more active than the mere virtue of patience under suffering. They who bring forth fruits with patience are they who do so with perseverance. They who run their race with patience are they who persevere in so running. They who maintain a patient continuance are they who maintain a persevering continuance in well-doing.

The whole passage is so plain that it scarcely admits of elucidation even from a paraphrase. But let the following be offered to you :—

'Therefore, O man, thou art without excuse, whosoever thou art that judgest; for in judging another thou condemnest thyself—seeing that thou who judgest doest the same things. And we are sure that God's judgment is according to truth, against them who commit these things. And dost thou think, O man, who judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape God's judgment? or do you despise His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, inadvertent of this, that it is His goodness which affords to you a season of repentance? But instead of this, do you, after your hard and impenitent heart, treasure up to yourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and against the day when the righteousness of God's judgments shall be rendered manifest? God will render to every man according to his deeds—to them who by a course of perseverance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality—eternal life; but unto them who of contention and obstinacy do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, will be rendered indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every son of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every one that worketh good, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile: for there will be no respect of persons with God on that day, whatever apparent pre-

ference He may make of one man over another, and of one people over another, in the present stage of His administrations. He will then judge every man according the light that was in his mind, according to the law which spake its authority to his conscience, and which he himself recognises to be of rightful obligation.'

It may be remarked that 'tribulation' simply denotes affliction, and is the same here in the original as in the passage, 'we are *troubled* on every side;' and that 'anguish' signifies the affliction from which there is no hope of our being extricated, and is the same in the original as in the passage, that 'though troubled on every side we are not *distressed*.'¹

At the outset of this chapter the apostle appeals to a principle which is vigorously at work in every bosom; and from its felt and conscious existence within us would he press upon our belief the reality of the same principle as residing in the God-head—as applied by Him to every creature who is capable of exercising it in his own mind, and leading to a result that will be verified on the great day of the winding up of this world's administration. By nature we are slow to self-condemnation; and beset with the engrossments of our own passion and our own interest, we see not in ourselves the criminality of the same things which we reprobate in others; and conscience either passes no verdict at all, or in such a faint and gentle whisper that it is not heard, when it takes a rare and a feeble cognisance of our own character. But the self-love which deafens the voice of conscience in its application to our own case, lays no such barrier in its way when it pronounces on the case of others; and hence the familiar spectacle of not merely an adverse judgment, but even of a wrath and an indignation in the mind of one man against the vanity or the dishonesty or the calumnies of another, to the evil of which he is blind or insensible when exemplified in an equal degree upon his own person.

Now this very judging of others proves that there is in him a capacity for this exercise. It shows that there is a moral light and a moral sense still residing in his bosom. It proves a sense of the difference between right and wrong; and that when a certain veil is lifted away from the materials of the examination, so as to bring his mind into a more unclouded discernment of them, then there is in that mind a conscience which can operate and pronounce aright upon what is meritorious and what is

blameworthy in the character of man. Should that man be himself, and should this circumstance throw a darkening shroud over the field of examination, it surely is no palliation of his sinfulness, nor does it render him less amenable to the judgment of God, if this shroud which hides his own character from his own eyes be drawn over it by his own selfishness. You cannot allege his blindness in mitigation of the sentence that is to go forth against him, if it be a blindness which has no place in reference to the faults of other men; and only gathers again over the organs of his moral discernment, when the hand of his own partiality sets up a screen between the eye of his conscience and the equal or perhaps surpassing faults of his own character. The mere fact that he can and does judge of others, proves that a law of right and wrong is present with him. The fact that he does not so judge of himself only proves, not that he is without the light of moral truth like the beasts that perish, but that he keeps down that truth by unrighteousness—that when its voice is so stifled as to be unheard it is he himself who stifles it—that his blindness is not the natural incapacity of an animal, but the wilful and chosen and much-loved blindness of a depraved man. If you see one of our species judging certain things in the conduct of another, infer from this that he knows of a code to which by his own voice he awards a moral authority. If you see him not judging in the same way of the same things in himself, consider this as a wilful suppression of the truth, which does not extenuate, but which in every way heightens his guilt, and turns his moral insensibility not into a plea but into an aggravation. And if there be not a country in the world where this twofold exhibition is not to be witnessed—if, even among the rudest wanderers of the desert there is the tact of a moral discernment between what is fair and what is injurious in the character of man—if in the fierce contests of savages you see them capable of being alive to the injustice of others, while in the wild and untamed rapacity of their natures they experience no check from the sense and conviction of their own, then be assured that on the great day of account will it be found that there is a law which can reach even unto them, and a retribution of equity which can be rendered unto them, and a vengeance which in despite of every plea and every palliation that can be offered for these darkest and most degraded of our brethren, can be righteously inflicted—making it manifest that a judgment-seat may be set up on the last day of our world,

and that around it, from its remotest corners, all the men of all its generations may be assembled, and that not one of them will be found to have lived without the scope and limits of a jurisdiction on the principles of which he may rightfully be tried, so as that yet the triumph of God's justice shall be signalized upon every individual; nor will there be a single doom pronounced upon any creature in any one department of the great moral territory that is not strictly accordant with this song of Revelation—"Even so, Lord God Almighty! true and righteous are thy judgments; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."

But let us look nearer home. There is not an exercise more familiar to your own hearts than that by which you feel the demerits of others, and judge of them accordingly. The very movements of anger within you are connected with a sense of right and wrong—such a sense as evinces you to be in possession of a law which you can bring to bear in examination and condemnation upon the doings of man; and should this law be evaded through the duplicities and the deceits of selfishness in its application to yourself, then know that a principle so universal among mankind in reference to their judgments the one of the other is of unfailing operation in the mind of the Deity, and will be applied by Him to all who by the mere possession of a moral faculty prove themselves to be the fitting subjects of His moral cognisance. If in the whole course of your existence you ever judged another, this renders you at that one time a right and proper subject of judgment yourself; and if this be your daily and habitual exercise, insomuch that any development of vanity or selfishness or unfairness in another is sure to call out from you a feeling of condemnation, then this proves that you are hourly and habitually the rightful subjects of a moral guardianship and a moral jurisdiction. The faculty you have is but a secondary impress of that superior and presiding faculty which belongs to God as the judge of all and the lawgiver of all. Be assured that there is a presiding justice in His administration; that there is a moral government founded on a righteousness the lessons of which are more or less known by all, and the sanctions of which will be accordingly fulfilled upon all. Your very power of judging others proves that its lessons are in some degree known to you. And think not, O man which judgest those who do such and such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God.

God in the day of final account will find out, in the case of

every human being whom He does condemn, the materials of his valid condemnation. These materials may in a great measure be hidden from us now ; and yet the palpable fact of each being able morally to judge another, and to pass his moral opinion upon another, however little he may be disposed to scrutinize himself, forms a very palpable disclosure of the fact, that there is in our hearts the sense of a moral law—a monitor who, if we do not follow him as our guide here, will be our accusing witness hereafter. And from every feeling of reprobation, if not from every feeling of resentment towards others of which we are capable, we may gather assurance of the fact, that there does exist within us such a sense of the distinction between right and wrong as, if not acted on in our own conduct, will be enough to convict us of a latent iniquity, and to call down upon us a rightful sentence of condemnation.

So long as self is the subject of its overseership the moral sense may be partial or reluctant or altogether negligent of its testimonies ; but if it can give those testimonies clearly enough and feelingly enough when it casts a superintending eye over the conduct of others, this proves that an inward witness could speak also to us—but does not, because we have bribed him into silence. In other words, it will be found on the last day that we had light enough to conduct us if we would have followed, and to condemn us if we have either refused or wilfully darkened its intimations. So that God will be clear when He speaketh and justified when He judgeth. He will wipe His hands of every outcast on that great and solemn occasion, and make it evident that the guilt of all the iniquities for which he is punished is at his own door—that there is no unrighteousness of severity with God, but that His judgment is indeed according to truth when it is against them who commit such things.

The apostle affirms his own sureness of this, and with a view to make us sure of it also. The truth is, that a want of belief in God as a Judge is nearly as prevalent as the want of belief in Christ as a Saviour. Could the one be established within you it would create an inquiry and a restlessness and an alarm which might soon issue in the attainment of the other ; but the general habit of the world proves, that in reference to God as a God of judgment, there is a profound and a prevailing sleep among its generations. The children of alienated and degenerate Nature are no more awake to the law in all the unchangeableness of its present authority, and in all the certainty of its coming

terrors, than they are awake to the gospel in the freedom of its offers, and in the sureness of its redemption, and in the exceeding greatness and preciousness of all its promises. There is just as little sense of the disease as there is little of esteem for the remedy. Theologians accordingly tell us of the faith of the law, and of the faith of the gospel. By the one we believe what the law reveals in regard to its own requirements and its own sanctions. By the other we believe what the gospel reveals in regard to its own proposals and its own invitations and its own privileges. Faith attaches itself to the law as well as to the gospel, and obedience to the gospel as well as to the law. The apostle here speaks of our not obeying the truth; and the psalmist says—"Lord, I have believed Thy commandments." The truth is, that among the men of our listless and secure species there is no realizing sense of their being under the law, or of their being under the haunting control and inspection of a Lawgiver. Their habit is that of walking in the counsel of their own hearts and in the sight of their own eyes; nor do they feel in the waywardness of their self-originating movements that they are the servants of another, and amenable to the judgment of another. Let a man just attend to the current of his thoughts and purposes and desires throughout the course of a whole day's business, and he will find how lamentably the impression of a Divine superintendence and the sense of a heavenly and unseen witness are away from his heart. This will not excuse his habitual ungodliness—due, as we have often affirmed it to be, to the wilful smothering of convictions which but for wilful depravity he might have had. But such being the real insensibility of man to his own condition as a responsible and an amenable creature, it is well that by such strenuous affirmations as those of the apostle, he should be reminded of the sureness wherewith God will appoint a day in righteousness, and institute a judgment over the quick and the dead.

Unbelief is not so much a dissent of the mind from any one particular truth or doctrine of revelation, as a darkness of the mind which intercepts a realizing view of all the truths and all the objects that lie spread over the region of spirituality. The clearing away of this darkness renders these objects visible; and it is a variation in the order of their disclosure which forms one chief cause of the varieties of religious experience. Some catch in the first instance a view of the law, scattering, as if from the mouth of a volcano, its menaces and its

terrors on all the children of disobedience; and it is not till after a dreary interval of discomposure and distress that they behold the mantle lifted away from that stronghold into which all of them may flee as an escape and a resting-place. Others, again, catch at the outset a milder and a quieter ray from the light of the Sun of Righteousness; and it is not till they have been conducted within the fold of a most sure and ample mediatorship, and from whence they may look tranquilly and at a safe and protected distance on all around them—it is not till then that they are made to see the hatefulness of sin, and all the dread and all the dignity of God's fiery denunciations against it. These things follow each other by a different succession with different individuals; but certain it is that the most partial glimpse of the smallest portion of the whole territory of faith is greatly more to be desired than the deep and sunken and unalleviated carnality of him who is wholly given unto things present and things sensible; and even he to whom the guilt and danger alone have been unfolded is far more hopefully conditioned than he who, alike insensible to the wrath of God the Judge and to the beseeching voice of God the Saviour, has taken up with time as his portion and his all—and living as he lists, lives in the enjoyment of a peace which, if not broken up ere he dies, a few years will demonstrate to have been indeed a fatal and then irrecoverable delusion.

The fourth verse of this chapter has been referred to by Peter in his second epistle, wherein he also explains why it is that God does not cut short the present stage of His administration—why it is that He tolerates so long the succession of one sinful generation after another—why it is that He sweeps not away such a moral nuisance as our rebellious world, and so has done with it—why it is, for example, that at this very hour we see not the symptoms of dissolving nature, and hear not the trumpet of preparation for the solemnities of the last day, and feel not the heat of melting elements, or the shaking of the ground from under us; but instead of these, why it is that all is going on in its wonted order, and the sun moves as steadily, and the seasons roll as surely, and all the successions of nature follow each other with as undisturbed regularity as if destined so to abide and so to persevere even unto eternity.

We know not the theory of ungodly men upon this subject, but their practice speaks most intelligibly what they feel about it. They tread upon this world's surface as firmly as if the

world stood on a secure and everlasting foundation. They prosecute this world's objects as strenuously as if in the gaining their little portion of it they gained a value which in exchange would be greater than the value of men's souls. They toil and calculate and devise for this world's interests with as intense and undivided earnestness as if they and the world were never to be separated. In the face of evidence, in the face of experience, in the face of all they know about death, and of all that has been revealed to them about judgment and retribution, and the final wreck of the present system of things, do they assign a character of perpetuity to what is seen and sensible around them; nor could they possibly labour more devotedly in the pursuits of time, if they themselves were to continue here for ever, and all things to continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

Such is the practical impression of a natural man about the life that he lives in the world, and all his habits of life and business are founded upon it. But how different from the revelation of its design and purpose as given by the apostles! It is a suspension of the wrath of God against sinners, that space may be allowed for repentance. It is that He, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return, forbears the infliction of His final vengeance till they have got their opportunity. The perverse interpretation which a worldly man puts upon the continuance of the world is, that the world is worthy of all his affections, and that it is his wisdom to rear upon its basis the fabric of his hopes. He misses the altogether different conclusion which should be drawn from it—that this continuance is due to the goodness of God lengthening out to him and to us all the season of an offered indemnity and of a proclaimed pardon, and of an inviting gospel with the whole of its privileges and blessings—and so, not knowing that this goodness, instead of riveting him more to the world, should lead him to forsake the love of it for the love of its Maker, does he misunderstand and misapply the bearing of time upon eternity.

What we have already noticed about the alternative character of that dispensation under which we sit, is strikingly brought out in the verses before us. Goodness to the innocent, or goodness to the deserving, merely displays this attribute in a state of simplicity; but the goodness which remains unquelled and unexhausted after it has been sinned against—the goodness which persists in multiplying upon the transgressor the chances of his

recovery, and that in the midst of affront and opposition—the goodness which, loath to inflict the retaliating blow, still holds out a little longer and a little longer, and with all the means in its power of avenging the insults of disobedience, still ekes out the season for its return, and plies it with all the encouragements of a free pardon and an offered reconciliation—this is the exuberance of goodness, this is the richness of forbearance and long-suffering; and it is the very display which God is now making in reference to our world. And by every year which rolls over our heads—by every morning in which we find that we have awoke to the light of a new day instead of awaking in torment—by every hour and every minute through which the stroke of death is suspended, and you still continue a breathing man in the land of gospel calls and gospel invitations—is God now justifying His goodness towards you. And earnest as He is for your return, and heedless as you are of all this earnestness, does it call as time moves onwards for a higher and a higher exertion of forbearance on the part of the Divinity to restrain His past and accumulating wrath from being discharged on the head of those among whom though God entreats yet no man will turn, and though He stretch out His hand yet no man regardeth.

Now, if such be the character of God in His relation to man, mark what character it stamps upon man should he remain unsoftened and unimpressed by it. It were offence enough to sin against the authority of a superior, but to sin against his forbearance forms a sore and a fatal aggravation. Thus to turn upon the long-suffering of God and to trample it—thus to pervert the season which He has allotted for repentance into a season of more secure and presumptuous transgression—thus upon every delay of vengeance with which He favours us, the more to strengthen ourselves in hard and haughty defiance against Him,—this indeed is a highway of guilt, which if you be not arrested therein, will lead to a sorer judgment and a deadlier consummation. Turn then all of you at the call of repentance, or it is the very highway on which you are treading. It is because He is rich in goodness that we have been spared to this present moment of our history, and now hear Him in the very language of His own revelation bid you turn and turn—for why will you die? But if you will not draw from the treasures of His forbearance, there is treasure of another kind that is heaping by every day of your neglected salvation in a store-

house of vengeance, and which on the great day when God shall ease Him of all His adversaries will all be poured forth upon you. And thus it is that if you despise the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering, and suffer them not to lead you to repentance, you will by your hardness and impenitency treasure up unto yourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgments of God.

Let us therefore in plain urgency bid you repent; and, untrammelled by system, set before you, as the apostle does, both the coming wrath and the coming glory, and tell you that the one is to him who doeth evil, and that the other is to him who doeth well; and we may be sure that there is nothing in faith, or in any of its mysteries, which will supersede the day of judgment as it is recorded in the passage here before us. The apostle is not only describing what would have happened under the first covenant, but what will happen under the second; for though justified by faith we shall be judged by works: and let not the one of these articles be so contrasted with the other as to throw a shade either of neglect or insignificance over it. When rightly understood they reflect upon each other a mutual lustre, and lend to each other a mutual confirmation. Faith is the highroad to repentance. Our acceptance of the righteousness of Christ as our title for an entrance into heaven is an essential stepping-stone to our own personal righteousness as our preparation for the joys and the exercises of heaven; and if there be a stirring of conscience and an agitation of alarm in any of your hearts, under the sense of your not being what you ought to be, we can do nothing more effectual than propose the blood of Christ to your faith, in order that, under the transforming and sanctifying influence of such a belief, you both be what you ought and do what you ought.

The great object of the apostle's demonstration is that men should make their escape from the penalties of the law to the hiding-place provided for them in the gospel. And though he here intimates the rewards which it holds out to obedience, and the fearful vengeance which it holds out against transgression, yet he does not intimate that any individual ever earned the one, or ever secured by his own righteousness an exemption from the other. His object is to make known to us the constitution or the economy of God's government, that should any of its subjects fulfil all its requisitions they should be rewarded—but without saying that they actually did so; or that should

any of its subjects fail in those requisitions they would be punished—but without telling us whether any or some or all come under this condemnation. How it was that they actually did conduct themselves under this administration he tells us afterwards, when he says of all, both Jews and Gentiles, that they were under sin ; and that by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, for that all had sinned and come short of the glory of God.

And yet after all there will be a judgment—and this judgment will proceed upon each individual according to the deeds done in his body ; and it is upon those who bring forth fruit with patience, or who maintain a patient continuance in well-doing, that these accents of invitation will descend—“ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ;” and it is also upon those who are contentious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, that the awful bidding away to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels will be pronounced by Him who conducts the solemnities of that great occasion. But then, as we read afterwards, it will be Jesus Christ to whom this judgment will be committed ; and the judgment will be according to “ my gospel,” or the gospel which the apostle proclaims to his hearers. The judgment of condemnation will be upon those who have withstood its overtures ; or who, if these overtures had never reached them, have withstood the instigations of their own conscience, which ought to have been a law unto them. And the judgment of acquittal will be upon those who have obeyed the truth, or who have rendered obedience unto the faith—those whose persons and whose works are accepted for the sake of a better righteousness than their own—those who, after they believed, were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, and were made the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus, and were created anew unto good works. So that after the first covenant has been superseded by the second—after man has become dead unto the law, and been made alive unto Christ—after all its demands have been satisfied, and it has no more power to challenge or to condemn him who truly believes in Jesus, Jesus himself takes up the judgment of him, and tries him on the question whether he is actually a believer ; and the deeds done in the body are the evidences of this question, and make it manifest on that day that the faith which he professed was no counterfeit, being fruitful in all those works of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God.

LECTURE VII.

ROMANS II. 12-29.

"For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law : and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves : which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.—Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law ; and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself ? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal ? thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery ? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege ? thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God ? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law : but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision. Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, shall not his uncircumcision be counted for circumcision ? and shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law ? For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh : but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

VER. 12.—Without a written law as the Jews had—they shall perish without being judged by that law. There will be another law to judge them ; and whosoever perishes, it will not be the consequence of a condemnation brought to bear upon him by a law which he did not know of. They who have sinned in the law, that is, in the written law, are they who have sinned under that law—the Jews, who will be judged by it. VER. 13.—There is a term which we may often have to recur to, and which we therefore shall explain at present. Some would have it that justification in the New Testament means the making of a man personally just. Conceive a thief, for example, to undergo such a transformation of character as that he henceforward is honest in all his transactions—this would be making him a just person ; and in the sense which some choose to assign to the

word, it would be justifying him. We believe it may be made out, in almost every place where it occurs, that this is not the real meaning of the term—that it should be taken not in a personal but in what may be called a forensic signification—or that to justify, instead of meaning to make just by a process of operation upon the character, means to pronounce or to declare just by the sentence of a judicial court. This is called the *forensic* sense of the term, because a court of justice was anciently called a forum; and it is evident that here at least the word must be understood forensically—for the doers of the law do not need to be made just personally. They are already so; and therefore for them to be justified is to be declared just by the sentence of him who administers the law. Ver. 15.—There seem here to be two distinct proofs of the Gentiles being a law unto themselves. The first is from the fact of there being a conscience at work in each bosom individually, and deponing either to the merit or the demerit of actions; the second from the fact of their accusing or excusing one another in the reasonings or disputes which took place between man and man; for what is translated ‘thoughts’ may be rendered into dialectic reasonings or disputes which one man has with another, when a question of right or justice is started between them. It proves them to be in possession of a common rule or standard of judging, or in other words, that a law is actually among them. So true is it, even in its application to the Gentiles, that there is a light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world. Ver. 22.—To commit sacrilege, or to take to our private use that which is consecrated to God. This is what might very readily be brought home to a Jewish conscience—it being matter of frequent complaint against the Jews, that they offered what was lame and defective in sacrifice. Ver. 24.—This is written, for example, in Ezek. xxxvi. 20, where it is said that the heathen in mockery said unto the people of Israel when they were carried away captive—“These are the people of the Lord, and are gone forth out of His land.”

This is all that needs to be advanced in the way of exposition, and the following is a paraphrase of this passage:—

‘For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish, not by the condemnation of that law which they had not, but of another which they had; and as many as have sinned who were under the dispensation of the written law shall by that law be judged. For as to the Jews, they are not the hearers of the law

who are reckoned just before God ; but they are the doers of the law only who shall be justified. And as to the Gentiles, they having not the law of Mount Sinai, yet when by nature they do the things contained in that law, these, though without a written code, have a something in its place which to them has all the authority of a law ; for they show that the matter of the law is written in their hearts—both from their consciences testifying what is right and wrong in their own conduct, and from their reasonings in which they either accuse or vindicate one another. No man shall be judged by a law known only to others and unknown to himself, but all shall be judged by the light which belonged to them, in that day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, and agreeably to the gospel which I now declare unto you. Behold, thou art called a Jew, and hast a confidence in thy law, and makest a boast of thy peculiar relationship with God, and thou knowest His will, and canst both distinguish and approve the things which are more excellent—being instructed out of thy law : and with all this superior advantage, thou lookest upon thyself as a guide of the blind, and as a light of them who are in darkness, and as an instructor of the ignorant, and as a teacher of babes—seeing that thou hast the whole summary of knowledge and truth which is in the law ; but it is not he who heareth or he who knoweth, but he who doeth that shall be justified. And dost thou who teachest another teach effectually thyself? thou who proclaimest that a man should not steal, dost thou steal? thou who sayest that a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou who abhorrest idols, dost thou rob God of His temple offerings? thou who makest thy boast of the law, through the breaking of the law dost thou dishonour God? for we have it upon record, that through you the name of God has been blasphemed. For your circumcision, and other outward observances which form the great visible distinction between you and the Gentiles—these are profitable if you keep the whole law ; but if you break the law, the keeping of its external ordinances will not raise you above the level of those who know them not and practise them not. But on the other hand, if these latter do by nature the things which by the light of nature they know to be lawful, and so keep righteousness as far as they are informed of it—though they have not practised the literal and outward ordinances, they shall be dealt with as if they had kept them. And what is more, they will even have such a superiority as to sit in judgment over you, who notwith-

standing your written law and your ordinances, are in fact transgressors of the law. For he is not a Jew who is only one outwardly. Neither is that the circumcision that is regarded by God which is outwardly in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and the genuine circumcision is that of a heart subject to the spirit of the law, and therefore crucified as to its carnal affections—and not that of a mere outward conformity to its visible observations. And the praise of this real circumcision is not of man, who can judge only according to appearances—but of God, who weigheth the secrets of the spirit, and who can alone judge righteously.’

Let us now pass onward to a few practical observations, founded on the passage which we have attempted to explain.

You can readily enough perceive how—both with Jews and Christians—there are materials enough for such an examination as renders them the fit subjects both of a reckoning and of a sentence on the great day of account. But this is not so immediately seen in regard to rude and uninformed Paganism. To be without the pale of a written revelation is held by many as tantamount to being without the pale of all moral and judicial cognisance; and yet we have many intimations that the Heathen will also be brought to the bar of the general judgment—that though perhaps more gently dealt with, yet they will be dealt with as the responsible subjects of God’s moral administration—that there is a principle of judgment which reaches even unto them, and upon which it will be a righteous thing for God to pass upon them a condemnatory sentence—Sodom and Gomorrah, we are informed, being to be sisted before the tribunal of that day and a punishment awarded them which will only be more tolerable than the vengeance that awaits those who have sinned in the face of clearer light and better opportunities: insomuch that we know not of any age—however far back it may lie removed in the darkness of antiquity, nor do we know of any wandering tribe—however secluded from all the communications of light and knowledge to the rest of the species, the men of which will not be called before the great tribunal of humanity, and there, on the review of their doings in this world, will have such a place and such a portion assigned to them in the next, as shall be in fullest harmony with the saying that all the ways of God are in truth and in righteousness.

It were repeating over here what we have already more than once and on various occasions endeavoured to argument, did we

again enter upon the question—How this can be? The Heathen will not be judged by the written law of Judaism, neither will they be judged out of the things that are written in the Scriptures of Christianity; God will not in their case charge them with the guilt of a sin for that which they were not taught and could not know to be sinful. It is not their helpless ignorance, and it is not the fatality of their birth, and it is not the thick moral envelopment that has settled itself over the face of their country which will condemn them; it will be their sin—and that coupled with the circumstance of their knowing it to be sin—which will condemn them. And we have already remarked in one lecture, that there do exist, even in the remotest tracts of Paganism, such vestiges of light as, when collected together, form a code or directory of moral conduct—that there are still to be found among them the fragments of a law which they never follow but with an approving conscience, and never violate but with the check of an opposing remonstrance, that by their own wilfulness and their own obstinacy is overborne—in other words, that they are a law unto themselves, and that their own conscience vests it with an authority, by bearing witness to the rightness and obligation of its requirements—so that, among the secret things which will be brought to light in the great day of revelation, will it be seen that all the sin for which a Heathen shall be made to suffer was sin committed in the face of an inward monitor, which warned him through time, and will condemn him at his outset upon eternity.

In another lecture we observed, that what brought the conscience of Paganism palpably out from its hiding-place was the undeniable fact of the charges and the recriminations and the defences of which the most unenlightened Pagans were capable in their controversies with each other. This capacity of accusing and of excusing proved a sense and a standard of morality to be amongst them. With the feeling of provocation after injury was there mixed the judgment of a difference between the right and the wrong—and even in the rude outcry of savage resentment and the fierce onset of savage warfare may we detect their perception of what is honest and what is unfair in the dealings of man with man. And only grant of any individual amongst them that he is keenly alive to the injustice of others to himself, while under the hurrying instigations of selfishness and passion he works the very same injustice against them, and you make that individual a moral and an accountable being. We grant

him to be sensible of what he ought to do, and thus make him the rightful subject of condemnation if he does it not. 'For thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them who do these things, and doest them thyself, that thou wilt escape the judgment of God?' Even we therefore, unknowing as we are of the inward machinery of another's heart, can trace as it were an avenue by which the most unlettered barbarian might be approached in the way of judgment and retribution. And much more may we be sure that God, who judgeth all things, will find a clear and open path to the fulfilment of the process that is here laid before us—summoning all to their account without exception; and from the furthest limits of the human territory calling Heathens to His jurisdiction, as well as Christians and Jews, and, under a law appropriate to each, dealing out the distributions of equity among the various families and denominations of the world.

In this passage the apostle, after the gradual and skilful approaches which he had made for the purpose of finding his way to the Jewish understanding, at length breaks out into the warfare of open and proclaimed argument. He throws out his express challenge, and closes with his adversary—thus entering upon the main business of his Epistle, the great object of which was to bring over his own countrymen to the obedience of the faith. After affirming of the two great classes of mankind, that each was subject to a law of its own acknowledging; and after, upon this principle, having convicted the Gentile world of its being under sin—he addresses himself to the Israelite, and dexterously lays open the egregious folly of his confidence—a confidence resting, it would appear, not on his practice of the law but barely on his possession of it—a satisfaction with himself, not for following the light, but simply for having the light—an arrogant sense of superiority to others, not in having obeyed the commandment, but just in having had the commandment delivered to him, thus turning into a matter of vanity that which ought in fact to have aggravated his shame and condemnation; and bearing it proudly over others, who had they acted up to their more slender advantages would in fact have been entitled to sit in judgment and superiority over him.

It is observable that, in this work of convincing the Jews of sin the apostle fastens in the first instance on the more glaring and visible delinquencies from the law of righteousness—as theft and adultery and sacrilege. He brings forth that which is fitted to strike conviction into the breast of a notorious transgressor,

who, just because the evidence of his guilt is more palpable than that of others—just because the materials of his condemnation more immediately meet the eye of his own conscience—is on that very account often more easily induced to take the first steps of that process which leads to reconciliation with the offended Law-giver. And this is the reason why it is said of publicans and profligate persons that they enter the kingdom of Heaven before the Scribes and the Pharisees. But the apostle is not satisfied with convincing them merely. Before he is done with his demonstration about the law, he enters into the very depths of it—even as the Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount did before him. It is possible to undergo the outward rite of circumcision, and not be circumcised in the spirit of our minds. And it is possible to maintain a conformity with all those requirements which bear on the external conduct without having a heart touched by the love of God, or in any way animated by the principle of godliness. He does not end his demonstration of sinfulness till he has completed it; and while the first attack of his expostulation is directed against those who do the overt acts and wear the visible insignia of rebellion, he sends it with a penetrating force into the recesses of a more plausible and pleasing character—where, with nothing to deform or to shed a disgrace over the outward history, there may be a heart still uncircumcised out of all its affections to the creature, and utterly alive unto the world, and utterly dead unto God.

We conclude with two remarks in the way of home and personal application, founded on the two senses given to the word ‘letter’ as contrasted with the word ‘spirit.’

The first sense that is given to the word ‘letter’ is the outward conformity to the law, which may be rendered apart from the inward principle of reverence or regard for it.

Now it is not merely true that your sabbaths and your sacraments may be as useless to you as the rite of circumcision ever was to the Jews; it is not merely true that the whole ceremonial of Christianity may be duly and regularly described on your part, without praise or without acceptance on the part of God; it is not merely true that worship may be held every day in your own houses, and your families be mustered at every recurring opportunity to close and unfailing attendance on the house of God: but it is also true that all the moral honesties of life may be rendered, and in the walks of honourable merchandise there ever be attached to your name the respect and confidence of all the

righteous, and foremost in the lists of philanthropy, every scheme connected with its cause may draw out from you the largest and most liberal ministrations,—and even all this, so far from the mere forcing of an outward exhibition, may emanate upon your visible doings from the internal operation of a native regard for your brethren of the same species, and of a high-minded integrity in all your transactions with them :—and yet one thing may be lacking. The circumcision of the heart may be that which you have no part in. All its longings may be towards the affairs and the enjoyments and the interests of mortality. Your taste is not toward what is sordid, but toward what is splendid in character ; but still it is but an earthly and a perishable splendour. Your very virtues are but the virtues of the world. They have not upon them the impress of that saintliness which will bear to be transplanted into heaven. The present and the peopled region of sense on which you expatiate, you deem, it is true, with the lustre of many fine accomplishments ; but they have neither the stamp nor the endurance of eternity : And difficult as it was to convict the Hebrew of sin, robed in the sanctities of a revered and imposing ceremonial, it is at least a task of as great strenuousness to lay the humiliation of the gospel spirit upon him who lives surrounded by the smiles and the applauses of society—or so to awaken the blindness and circumcise the vanity of his heart, as to bring him down a humble suppliant at the footstool of mercy.

What turns the virtues of earth into splendid sins is that nothing of God is there. It is the want of this animating breath which impresses upon them all the worthlessness of materialism. It is this which makes all the native loveliness of our moral world of as little account in the pure and spiritual reckoning of the upper sanctuary, as is a mere efflorescence of beauty on the face of the vegetable creation. It serves to adorn and even to sustain the interests of a fleeting generation. Verily it hath its reward. But not till, under a sense of nothingness and of guilt, man hies him to the cross of expiation—not till, renouncing all righteousness of his own, he flees for shelter to the righteousness of Christ, as that alone which is commensurate to the demands and congenial with the holy character of the Lawgiver—not till, in the attitude of one whose breast is humbled out of all its proud complacencies, he receives the atonement of the gospel, and along with it receives a clean heart and a right spirit from the hand of his accepted Mediator—it is not till the period

of such a transformation, when he is made the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus, that the true image of moral excellence which was obliterated from our species at the fall comes to be restored to him, or that he is put in the way of attaining a resemblance to his Maker in righteousness and in true holiness.

We meant to have added another remark founded on another sense of the word 'letter,' which is the Word of God as opposed to the Spirit of God; but we have no time to expatiate any further. Let us only observe that the apostle speaks both of the letter and spirit of the New Testament. And certain it is, that were we asked to fix on a living counterpart in the present day to the Jew of the passage now under consideration—it would be on him who, thoroughly versant in all the phrases and dexterous in all the arguments of orthodoxy, is without one affection of the old man circumcised and without one sanctified affection to mark him the new man in Christ Jesus our Lord—withal a zealous and staunch and sturdy controversialist. He too rests in the form of sound words, and is confident that he is a light of the blind, and founds a complacency on knowledge though it be knowledge without love and without regeneration—nor can we think of any delusion more hazardous and at the same time more humbling, than that by which a literal acquaintance with the gospel, and a literal adherence on the part of the understanding to all its truths and all its articles, may be confounded with the faith which is unto salvation. Faith is an inlet to holy affections. Its primary office is to admit truth into the mind, but it is a truth that impresses as well as informs. The kingdom of God is neither in word alone nor in argument alone—it is also in power; and while we bid you look unto Jesus and be saved, it is such a look as will cause you to mourn and to be in heaviness—it is such a look as will liken you to His image, and import into your own character the graces and the affections which adorn His. It is here that man finds himself at the limits of his helplessness. He cannot summon into his breast that influence which will either circumcise its old tendencies or plant new ones in its room. But the doctrine of Jesus Christ and of Him crucified is the grand instrument for such a renovation; and he is at his post, and on the likely way of obtaining the clean heart and the right spirit, when, looking humbly and desirously to Jesus as all his salvation, he may at length experience the operation of faith working by love, and yielding all manner of obedience.

LECTURE VIII.

ROMANS III. 1, 2.

“What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.”

OUR reason for stopping at this part of our ordinary course, and coming forward with a discussion on these verses, is that the subject of them seems to guide us to a decision in a matter that has been somewhat obscured with the difficulties of a hidden speculation. You are aware that to whom much is given of them much will be required; and the question then comes to be, Whether is it better that that thing shall be given or withheld? The Jew who sinned against the light of his revelation will have a severer measure of retribution dealt out to him than the Gentile who only sinned against the light of his own conscience; and the nations of Christendom, who have been plied with the offers of the gospel, and put them heedlessly and contemptuously away, will incur a darker doom throughout eternity than the native of China, whose remoteness, while it shelters him from the light of the New Testament in this world, shelters him from the pain of its fulfilled denunciations in another; and he who sits a hearer under the most pure and faithful ministrations of the Word of God has more to answer for than he who languishes under the lack either of arousing sermons or of solemn and impressive ordinances; and neither will a righteous God deal so hardly with the members of a population where reading is unknown and the Bible remains an inaccessible rarity among the families, as of a population where schools have been multiplied for the behoof of all, and scholarship has descended and is diffused among the poorest of the commonwealth. And with these considerations, a shade of uncertainty appears to pass over the question, whether the christianization of a people ought at all to be meddled with? If the gospel of Jesus Christ only serve to exalt the moral and everlasting condition of the few who receive it, because to them it is the savour of life unto life, and serve also to aggravate the condition of those who reject it, because to them the savour of

death unto death, should a nation now sitting in the darkness of Paganism be approached with the overtures of the gospel? This is a doubt which has often been advanced for the purpose of throwing discouragement and discredit on the enterprise of missionaries; and, though not on exactly the same principle, there are many still who hesitate on the measure of spreading education among the peasantry. Altogether, it were desirable, in this age of benevolent enterprise, to know whether it is the part of benevolence to move in this matter, or to sit still and let the world remain stationary—leaving it to that milder treatment and those gentler chastisements which the guilt of man, when associated with the ignorance of man, will call down at the great day from the hand of Him who both judges and administers righteously.

We think it must be obvious to those whose minds have been at all disciplined into the soberness of wisdom and true philosophy, that without an authoritative solution of this question from God Himself, we are really not in circumstances to determine it. We have not all the materials of the question before us. We know not how to state with the precision of arithmetic what the addition is which knowledge confers upon the sufferings of disobedience, or how far an accepted gospel exalts the condition of him who was before a stranger to it. We cannot balance the one against the other, or render you any computation of the difference that there is between them. We cannot descend into hell, and there take the dimensions of that fiercer wrath and tribulation and anguish which are laid on those who have incurred the guilt of a rejected Christianity; and neither can we ascend into heaven, and there calculate the heights of blessedness and joy to which Christianity has raised the condition of those who have embraced it. It is all a matter of revelation on which side the difference lies; and he who is satisfied to be wise up to that which is written, and feels no wayward restlessness of ambition after the wisdom that is beyond it, will quietly repose upon the deliverance of Scripture on this subject; and never will the surmises or the speculations of an uninformed world lay an obstacle on him as he moves along the path of his plainly bidden obedience; nor will all the hazards and uncertainties which the human imagination shall conjure up from the brooding abyss of human ignorance, embarrass him in the execution of an obviously prescribed task. So that if in any event Christ must be preached, and if in the face of consequences, known or unknown, the know-

ledge of Him must be spread abroad to the uttermost, and if he be required at this employment to be instant in season and out of season, declaring unto all the way of salvation as he has opportunity—if these be the positive requirements of the Bible, then whatever be the proportion which the blessings bear to the curses that he is the instrument of scattering on every side of him, enough for him that the authority of Heaven is the warrant of his exertions; and that, in making manifest the savour of the knowledge of the gospel in every place, he is unto God a sweet savour of Christ, both in them that are saved and in them that perish.

“Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven,” and “go into all the world, and teach all nations.” These parting words of our Saviour ere He ascended to His Father may not be enough to quell the anxieties of the speculative Christian, but they are quite enough to decide the course and the conduct of the practical Christian. To his mind it sets the question of missions abroad, and also the question of schools and Bibles and christianizing processes at home, most thoroughly at rest. And though the revelation of the New Testament had not advanced one step further on that else untrodden field, where all that misery and all that enjoyment which are the attendant results upon a declared gospel in the world might be surveyed and confronted together, yet would he count it his obligation simply to do the bidding of the Word, though it had not met the whole of his appetite for information. But in the verses before us we think it does advance this one step further. It does appear to us to enter on the question of profit and loss attendant on the possession of the oracles of God, and to decide on the part of the former that the advantage was much every way. And it is not for those individuals alone who reaped the benefit that the apostle makes the calculation. He makes an abatement for the unbelief of all the others; and, balancing the difference, he lands us in a computation of clear gain to the whole people. And it bears importantly on this question, when we are thus told of a nation with whom we are historically acquainted, that it was better for them on the whole that they possessed the oracles of God. We may well venture to circulate these precious words among all people, when told of the most stiffnecked and rebellious people on earth, that with all the abuse they made of their Scriptures, these Scriptures conferred not merely a glory but a positive advantage on their nation. And yet what a fearful deduction

from this advantage must have been made by the wickedness that grew and gathered and was handed down from one generation to another! If it be true of the majority of their kings that they did evil in the sight of the Lord exceedingly, and if it be true that with the light of revelation and amid the warnings of prophecy they often rioted amongst the abominations of idolatry beyond even all the nations that were around them, and if it be true that the page of Jewish history is far more blackened by the recorded atrocity and guilt of the nation than ever it is illumed by the memorials of worth or of piety, and if it be true that throughout the series of many centuries which rolled over the heads of the children of Israel, while they kept the name and existence of a community, there was an almost incessant combat between the anger of an offended God and the perverseness of a stout-hearted and rebellious people—insomuch that, after the varied discipline of famine and invasion and captivity had been tried for ages and found to be fruitless, the whole fabric of the Hebrew commonwealth had by one tremendous discharge of fury to be utterly swept away—it were hard to tell what is the amount of aggravation upon all this sin, in that it was sin against the light of the oracles of God; but the apostle, in the text, has told us, that let the amount be what it may, it was more than countervailed by the positive good done through these oracles; and comparatively few as the righteous men were who walked in the ordinances and commandments of the Lord blameless, and however thinly sown were those worthies of the old dispensation on whom the light that beamed from heaven shed the exalting influences of faith and godliness, and though the upright of the of the land were counted but in minorities and in remnants throughout almost every period of the nation's progress from its beginning to its overthrow—yet it serves to guide our estimate of comparison between the gain and the loss of God's oracles in the midst of a country when, with the undoubted fact of the few who had been made holy on the one hand, and the many on whom they fastened a sorer condemnation upon the other, we are still told that the gain did preponderate—that the Jews who had the Scriptures had an advantage over the Gentiles who had them not—that any people are better of having among them the instrument which makes a man a child of light, even though in its operation it should stamp a deeper guilt upon the many, and make them more the children of hell than before—that all the means therefore which, in their direct and rightful tendency have

the effect to save and to enlighten human souls, should be set most strenuously agoing, even though these means should be resisted; and it is impossible but this offence must come, and a deadlier woe will be inflicted on all through whom such an offence cometh. Should the fishers of men rescue a few from the abyss of nature's guilt and nature's wretchedness, it would appear that in the work of doing so they may be the instruments of sinking many deeper in that abyss than if it had never been disturbed or entered upon with such an operation. We have not the means of instituting a comparison between the quantity of good that is rendered by a small number being entirely extricated from the gulf of perdition, and the quantity of evil that ensues from a large number being more profoundly immersed in it than before. This is a secret which still lies in the womb of eternity; yet we cannot but think that a partial disclosure has been made, and the veil is in part lifted away from it by the deliverance of our apostle. At all events it clears away the practical difficulties which are attendant on a missionary or christianizing question, when we are here given to understand that the Jews, with all the aggravations consequent on sin when it is sin in the face of knowledge, were on the whole better in that they had the oracles of God.

Let us now follow up these introductory views with a few brief remarks both on the speculative and on the practical part of this question.

First, then, as to the speculative part of it. The Bible when brought into a new country may be instrumental in saving the some who submit to its doctrine, and in so doing it saves them from an absolute condition of misery in which they were previously involved. It makes good to each of them the difference that there is between a state of great positive wretchedness and a state of great positive enjoyment. If, along with this advantage to the few who receive it, it aggravates the condition of those who reject it, it is doubtless the instrument of working out for each of them an increment of misery. But it does not change into wretchedness that which before was enjoyment—it only makes the wretchedness more intense; and the whole amount of the evil that has been rendered is only to be computed by the difference in degree between the suffering that is laid upon sin with and sin without the knowledge of the Saviour. We do not know how great the difference of misery is to those many whose guilt has been aggravated by the neglect of an offered gospel;

and we do not know how to compare it arithmetically with the change from positive misery to positive enjoyment which is experienced by those few who have embraced the gospel. In the midst of all this uncertainty there is room and place in our minds for the positive information of Scripture; and if we gather from it that it was better for the Jews—in spite of all the deeper responsibility and deeper consequent guilt which their possession of the Old Testament laid upon the perverse and disobedient of the nation, yet that a net accession of gain was thus rendered to the whole—then may we infer that any enterprise by which the Bible is more extensively circulated, or more extensively taught, is of positive benefit to every neighbourhood which is the scene of such an operation.

But secondly.—Though in the Jewish history that has already elapsed they were ‘the few’ to whom the oracles of God were a blessing, and ‘the many’ to whom they were an additional condemnation, yet on the whole did the good so predominate in its amount over the evil, that it on the whole was for the better and not for the worse that they possessed these oracles. But the argument gathers in strength as we look onward to futurity—as aided by the light of prophecy we take a glimpse, however faint and distant, of millennial days—as we dwell upon the fact of the universal prevalence that the gospel of Jesus Christ is at length to reach in all the countries of the world—when we consider that all our present proportions shall at length be reversed, and that if Christians now be the few to the many, Christians then will be the many to the few. Even in this day of small things, the direct blessing which follows in the train of a circulated Bible and a proclaimed gospel overbalances the incidental evil; and when we think of the latter-day glory which it ushers in—when we think of that secure and lasting establishment which in all likelihood it will at length arrive at—when we compute the generations of that millennium which is awaiting a peopled and a cultivated world—when we try to fancy the magnificent results which a labouring and progressive Christianity will then land in—who should shrink from the work of hastening it forward because of a spectre conjured up from the abyss of human ignorance? Even did the evil now predominate over the good, still is a missionary enterprise like a magnanimous daring for a great moral and spiritual achievement, which will at length reward the perseverance of its devoted labourers. It is like a triumph for the whole species, purchased at the expense

not of those who shared in the toils of the undertaking but of those who met with unconcern or contempt the benevolence which laboured to convert them. There are collateral evils attendant on the progress of Christianity ; at one time it brings a sword instead of peace, and at another it stirs up variance in families, and at all times does it deepen the guilt of those who resist the overtures which it makes to them. But these are only the perils of a voyage that is richly laden with the moral wealth of many future generations. These are but the hazards of a battle which terminates in the proudest and most productive of all victories—and if the liberty of a great empire be an adequate return for the loss of the lives of its defenders, then is the glorious liberty of the children of God, which will at length be extended over the face of a still enslaved and alienated world, more than an adequate return for the spiritual loss that is sustained by those who, instead of fighting for the cause, have resisted and reviled it.

We now conclude with a few practical remarks.

First.—It is with argument such as this that we would meet the anti-missionary spirit which, though a good deal softened and silenced of late years, still breaks forth occasionally into active opposition ; or, when it forbears to be aggressive, still binds up the great body of professing Christians in a sort of lethargic indifference to one of the worthiest of causes. The time is not far distant from us when a christianizing enterprise was traduced as a kind of invasion on the safety and innocence of Paganism—when it was the burden of many an eloquent and well-told regret, that the simplicity of Hindoo manners should so be violated—when something like the charm of the golden age was associated with these regions of primeval idolatry—and it was affirmed that though idolatry is blind, yet it were better not to awaken its worshippers than to drag them forth by instruction to the hazards and the exposures of a more fearful responsibility. We trust you perceive from our text that even though the converts were few and the guilty scorers of the gospel message were many, yet still, on the principles of the apostolic reckoning, there may even during the first years of a much-resisted Christianity be an overplus of advantage. And why should we be restrained now from the work by a calculation which did not restrain the missionaries of two thousand years ago, when they made their first entrance on a world of nearly unbroken and unalleviated heathenism ? Shall we, with

our pigmy reach of anticipation, cast off the authority of precepts issued by Him who seeth the end from the beginning, and who can both bless the day of small things with a superiority of the good over the evil, and make it the dawn of such a glory as will far exceed the brightest visions in which a philanthropist can indulge? The direction at all events is imperative, and of standing obligation. It is, "Go and preach the gospel to every creature," and "Go and preach unto all nations;" and you want one of the features of him who standeth perfect and complete in the whole will of God—you are lacking in that complete image of what a Christian ought to be—if, without desire and without effort in behalf of that great process by which the whole world is at length to be called out from the darkness and the repose of its present alienation, you neither assist it with your substance nor remember it in your prayers.

But secondly.—If man is to be kept in ignorance because every addition of light brings along with it an addition of responsibility, then ought the species to be arrested at home as well as abroad in its progress towards a more exalted state of humanity; and such evils as may attend the transition to moral and religious knowledge should deter us from every attempt to rescue our own countrymen from any given amount of darkness by which they may now be encompassed.¹

But lastly.—However safe it is to commit the oracles of God into the hands of others, yet considering ourselves in the light of those to whom these oracles are committed, it is a matter of urgent concern whether to us personally the gain or the loss will predominate. It is even of present advantage to the nation at large that the word of God circulates in such freedom and with such frequency among its numerous families; but this only because the good rendered to some prevails over the evil of that additional guilt which is incurred by many. And still it resolves itself, with every separate individual, into the question of his secured heaven or his more aggravated hell—whether he be of the some who turn the message of God into an instrument of conversion, or of the many who by neglect and unconcern render it the instrument of their sorer condemnation? It may be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah than for him in the day of judgment. To have been so approached from heaven with the overtures of salvation as every man is who has the Bible within

¹ We forbear to expatiate over again upon this particular argument, as we have already brought it forward in the Fifteenth Sermon of our Commercial Discourses.

his reach—to have had such invitations at your door as you may have had for the mere reading of them—to have been in the way of such a circular from God to our guilty species, which though expressly addressed to no one individual, yet by the wide sweep of a “whosoever will” makes it as pointed a message to all and to any as if the proprietor of each Bible had received it under cover with the inscription of his name and surname from the upper sanctuary—that God should thus pledge Himself to the offer of a free pardon through the blood of Jesus, and profess His readiness to pour out His Spirit upon all who turn to Him that they may live—for Him to have brought Himself so near in the way of entreaty, and to have committed—in the face of many high and heavenly witnesses who are looking on—to have committed His truth to the position that none who venture themselves on the revealed propitiation of the gospel and submit to the guidance of Him who is the author of it shall fail of an entrance into life everlasting—thus to have placed a blissful eternity within a step of creatures so utterly polluted and undone, is indeed a wondrous approximation. But oh! how tremendously will it turn the reckoning against us, should it be found that though God thus willed our salvation yet we would not; and refusing to walk in the way which He with such a mighty cost of expiation had prepared for us, cleaved in preference to the dust of a world that is soon to pass away; and living as we list, maintain our guilty indifference to offers so full of tenderness, to prospects of glory so bright and so alluring.

But let us hope better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. Let us call upon you to follow in the train of those Old Testament worthies, who though few in number so redeemed the loss incurred by the general perverseness of their countrymen as to make it on the whole for the advantage of their nation that to them were committed the oracles of God. Be followers of them who through faith and patience are now inheriting those promises, which when in the flesh they saw afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.—Declare plainly by your life that you seek another country; that you have no desire for a world where all is changing and breaking up around you—where sin is the native element, and death walking in its train rifles the places of our dearest remembrance of all those sweets of friendship and

society which went to gladden them. Let the sad memorial of this world's frailty, and the cheering revelations of another, shut you up unto the faith; let them so place the alternative of time or eternity before you, as to resolve for you which of them is far better. And with such a remedy for guilt as the blood of an all-prevailing atonement; defer no longer the work of reconciliation with the God whom you have offended; and receive not His grace in vain; and turn to the study and perusal of those oracles which He hath granted to enlighten you—knowing that they are indeed able to make you wise unto salvation through the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

LECTURE IX.

ROMANS III. 1-9.

"What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?—Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.—But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man.) God forbid: for then how shall God judge the world?—For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? and not rather, (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? whose damnation is just. What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin."

You will recollect that by the argument of the foregoing chapter, our apostle, after having demonstrated the universality of Gentile guilt in the sight of God, attempts the same demonstration in reference to the Jews. He proves, that with the possession of all that which distinguished them outwardly from other nations, they might fully participate in that condemnation to which sin has rendered us all liable; and even affirms as much as may lead us to understand that the privileges which belonged to them, when neglected and abused, were in fact so many circumstances of aggravation. It was very natural that at this point of his argument he should conceive an objection that might arise against it; and speaking in the person of an adversary, he proposes this objection in the form of a question from him. This question he answers in his own name. And the remonstrance of his imaginary opponent, together with his own reply to it, occupy the first and second verses of the chapter upon which we have entered. Look upon these two verses as the first step and commencement of a dialogue that is prosecuted onwards to the ninth verse, and you have, in what we have now read, a kind of dramatic interchange of argument going on between Paul and a hostile reasoner, whom he himself by an act of imagination has brought before him. This is a style of argumentation that is quite familiar in controversy. The preacher will sometimes deal with an objection just in the

very terms he would have done if it were cast in living conversation against him by one standing before his pulpit; and the writer, when he anticipates a resistance of the same kind to his reasoning, will just step forward to encounter it as he would have done if an entrance were actually made against him on the lists of authorship. This is the way in which the apostle appears to be engaged in the verses before us; and if you conceive them made up of objections put by an antagonist, and replies to those questions by himself, it will help to clear your understanding of the passage now under our consideration.

You have already heard at length all the elucidation which we mean to offer on the first question and part of the first answer of this dialogue. After the Jew had been so much assimilated in guilt to the Gentile as he had been by the apostle in the last chapter, the objection suggests itself—Where then is the advantage of having been a Jew? Where is the mighty blessedness which was spoken of by God to the patriarchs as that which was to signalize their race above all the other descendants of all other families? The reply given to this in the second verse is, that the chief advantage lay in their having committed to them the oracles of God. You will recollect the inference that we drew from this answer of the apostle—even that though the Scriptures laid a heavier responsibility upon those who had them than upon those who had them not, and though in virtue of this the many among the ancient Hebrews were rendered more criminal than they else would have been, and were therefore sunk on that account more deeply into an abyss of condemnation; and though they were only the few who by faith in these Scriptures attained to the heights of celestial blessedness and glory, yet there must have been a clear preponderance of the good that was rendered over the evil that was incurred, seeing it to be affirmed by the inspired author of this argument that there was a clear advantage upon the whole. We will not repeat the applications which we have already made of this apostolic statement, to the object of vindicating a missionary enterprise, by sending the light and education of Christianity abroad—or vindicating the efforts of diffusing more extensively than heretofore the same education at home. But be assured, that it were just as wrong to abstain from doing this which is in itself good lest evil should come, as it were to do that which is in itself evil that good may come. Nor, however powerfully they may have operated in retarding the best of causes, is there anything in the objections to

which we there adverted that ought to keep back our direct and immediate entrance upon the bidden field of—"Go and teach all nations"—"Go and preach the gospel to every creature under heaven."

The apostle we conceive to be still speaking in his own person throughout the third and fourth verses. It is to be remarked that 'some' in the original signifies a part of the whole, but not necessarily a small part of it. It may be a very great part and majority of the whole—as in that passage of the book of Hebrews where it is said, "Some when they had heard did provoke : howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." The truth is, that as far as we historically know of it, all did provoke God upon that occasion save Joshua and Caleb, and those younger of the people who were still incapable of bearing arms. And in Timothy we read that "some shall depart from the faith"—though the apostle is there speaking of that overwhelming apostasy of the middle ages which left so faint and feeble a remainder of light to Christendom for many centuries. And in like manner were they the greater number of the Jews who were only so in the letter and in the outward circumcision, and were not so in spirit or in the circumcision of the heart. They were greatly the more considerable part who did not believe ; and yet in the face of this heavy deduction from the good actually rendered to the Jews, could the apostle still stand up in the vindication of those promises which God held forth to their ancestors—of a blessing upon those who should come after them ; letting us know that though they were the many who aggravated their own condemnation, and the few who by inheriting the privileges inherited a blessing, yet the truth of God, here called the faith of God, was not unfulfilled—that whatever comes in the shape of promise or of prophecy from Him will have its verification—that whatever be the deceitfulness of man God will still retain the attribute given to Him by the apostle elsewhere, even that He cannot lie. So that should it be questioned, whether the family of Israel in consequence of God's dealing with them had an advantage over all the other families—it will be found in the holy and faithful men of the old dispensation, few as they were—and it will be found on the great day of manifestation, when all the reverses of Jewish history from the first calling forth of Abraham to their last glorious restoration shall have been accomplished—that He will be justified in every utterance He made respecting them, and that He will overcome when He is judged of it.

‘God forbid’ is in the original simply ‘Let it not be.’

In the fifth verse the apostle again brings forward his objection, and puts into his mouth an argument. It is our unrighteousness, says he, which hath made room for God’s righteousness in its place, which sets it off as it were, and renders it so worthy of acceptance; and if this be the case, might it not be said that it is not righteous in God to inflict wrath for that which hath redounded so much to the credit and the manifestation of His own attributes? This objection is brought forward in another form in the seventh verse: If God’s truth have been rendered more illustrious by my lie, or by my sin, and so He has been the more glorified in consequence—why does He find fault with me and punish me for sins which advance eventually His honour? Should not we rather sin that God’s righteousness may be exalted, and do the instrumental evil that the ultimate good may come out of it? The apostle gives two distinct answers to these questions, after giving us a passing intimation in the fifth verse that he is not speaking in his own person as an apostle when he brings forward these objections, but only speaking as a man whom he supposes to set himself against the whole of his argument; and tells us also in the seventh verse that the maxim of doing evil that good may come, which he here supposes to be pleaded by an unbelieving Jew, was also charged, but slanderously charged, upon Christians. The way in which he sets aside the objection in the fifth verse is, that if admitted, God would be deprived of His power of judging the world—and the objection in the seventh and eighth verses is set aside by the simple affirmation, that if there be any who would do evil that good may come, their condemnation is just.

Before urging these lessons any further, let us offer a paraphrase of these verses:—

‘What is the advantage then possessed by the Jew, it will be said, or what benefit is it to him that he is of the circumcision? We answer that the benefit is great many ways—and chiefly that to that people have been committed the revealed Scriptures of God. And even though the greater part did not believe, their unbelief puts no disparagement on the veracity of God. Though all men were liars, this would detract nothing from the glory of God’s truth; and however this objection may be pushed, it will be found in the language of the Psalmist that God will be justified in all His sayings, and will overcome when He is judged. But to this it may further be said, if God do not suffer

in His glory by our guilt—nay, if out of the materials of human sinfulness He can rear a ministration by which He and all His attributes may be exalted—why should He deal in anger against those whom He can thus turn into the instruments of His honour? The unrighteousness of man sets off the righteousness of God, and He gets glory to Himself by our doings; and is it therefore a righteous thing in Him to inflict vengeance on account of them? Such is the sophistry of vice, but it cannot be admitted—else the judgment of God over the world is at an end. And it is further said by those who in the language of a former chapter have turned God's truth into a lie—that this hath made God's truth to abound the more unto His own glory—that He has so dealt with them as to bring a larger accession of glory to Himself; and where then is the evil of that which finally serves to illustrate and make brighter than before His character? Should I be condemned as a sinner for having done that which glorifies God?—might not I do the instrumental evil for the sake of the eventual good? Such is the morality that has been charged upon us—but falsely so charged—for it is a morality which ought to be reprobated.

In this passage the apostle touches, though but slightly and transiently, on a style of scepticism to which he afterwards adverts at greater length in the ninth chapter of this epistle; and we, in like manner, shall defer the great bulk of our observations about it till we have arrived at the things hard to be understood which are found therein. But let us also follow the apostle in that fainter and more temporary notice which he takes of these things on the present occasion—when before completing his proof that both Jews and Gentiles were under sin, he both affirms that God was glorified through the former in spite of their unrighteousness, and yet deals with that unrighteousness as if it were an offence to Him—that even out of their disobedience an actual honour accrues to Himself, and yet that the vengeance of His wrath is due to that disobedience—that let the worthlessness of man be what it may, the vindication and the victory will be God's, and yet upon this very element of worthlessness, which serves to illustrate the glories of His character, will He lay the burden of a righteous indignation. There was something in the subtlety of the Jewish doctors of that age which stood nearly allied with the infidel metaphysics of the present, and which would attempt to darken and to overthrow all moral distinctions, and to dethrone God from that eminence which as the Moral

Governor of the world belongs to Him. And it is well that the apostle gives us a specimen of his treatment of this sophistry, that when exposed to it ourselves we may know what is the scriptural way of meeting it, and what are the scriptural grounds on which its influence may be warded away from us.

The truth is, that in the days of the apostle as well as in our own days speculative difficulties were made use of to darken and confound the clearest moral principles ; and then as well as now did the imaginations of men travel into a region that was beyond them, whence they fetched conceits and suppositions of their own framing, for the purpose of extinguishing the light that was near and round about them. And some there were who took refuge from the conviction of sin in the mazes of a sophistry by which they tried to perplex both themselves and others out of the plainest intimations of conscience and common sense. There is no man of a fair and honest understanding who, if not carried beyond his depth by the subtleties of a science falsely so called, does not yield his immediate consent—and with all the readiness he would to a first principle—to the position that God is the rightful judge of His own creatures, and that it is altogether for Him to place the authority of a law over them and to punish their violations, and that it is an unrighteous thing in us to set our will in opposition to His will, and a righteous thing in Him to avenge Himself of this disobedience. These are what any plain man will readily admit as being among the certainties of the Divine Government ; and not till he bewilders himself by attempting to explain the secrecies of the Divine Government will the impression of these certainties be at all deafened or effaced from the feelings of his moral nature. Now what the apostle appears to be employed about in this passage, is just to defend our moral nature against an invasion upon the authority of its clearest and most powerful suggestions. The antagonists against whom he here sets himself feel themselves pursued by his allegations of their guilt, and try to make their escape from a reproachful sense of their own sinfulness ; and for this purpose would they ambitiously lift up the endeavours of their understanding towards the more high and unsearchable counsels of God. It is very true, that however sinfully men may conduct themselves He will get a glory to His own attributes from all His dealings with them. It is very true, that like as the wrath of man shall be made to praise Him, so shall the worthlessness of man be made to redound to the honour of God's truth and of

God's righteousness. Should even all men be liars, the veracity of God will be the more illustrated by its contrast with this surrounding evil, and by the fulfilment upon it of all His denunciations. The holiness of the Divinity will blaze forth as it were into brighter conspicuousness on the dark ground of human guilt and human turpitude. God manifests the dignity of His character in His manifested abhorrence against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men. In the last day the glory of His power will be made known when the Judge cometh in flaming fire to take vengeance on those who disobey Him; and even the very retribution which He deals forth on the heads of the rebellious will be to Him the trophies of an awful and lofty vindication.

Now the objection reiterated in the various questions of this passage is, that if out of the unrighteousness of man such a revenue as it were of fame and character shall accrue to the Deity—why should He be offended? Why should He inflict so much severity on the sin which after all serves to illustrate His own sacredness and to exalt His own majesty? Why should He lay such a weight of guilt on those who it would appear are to be the instruments of His glory? Is not sin, if not a good thing in itself, at least a good thing in its consequences, when it thus serves to swell the pomp of the Eternal and throw a brighter radiance around His ways? And might not we then do this evil thing that the final and the resulting good may emerge out of it? And might not that sin which we have been taught to shun as dishonouring to God, be therefore chosen, on the very opposite principle of doing that which will ultimately bring a reversion of honour to His character and of credit and triumph to all His administrations?

One would have thought that the obvious answer to all this sophistry was, that if you take away from God the prerogative of judging and condemning and inflicting vengeance, you take away from Him all the ultimate glory which He ever can derive from the sinfulness of His own creatures—that the very way in which the presence of sin sets forth the sacredness of the Deity is by the abhorrence that He manifests towards it—that the unrighteousness of man commendeth the righteousness of God only by God dealing with this unrighteousness in the capacity of a judge and of a lawgiver—that if you strip Him of the power of punishment you strip Him of the power of rendering such a vindication of His attributes as will make Him venerable and holy in the eyes of His own subjects—that in fact there remains no

possibility of God fetching any triumph to Himself from the rebelliousness of His creatures if He cannot proceed in the work of moral government against their rebellion. And thus, if God may not find fault, and if His judicial administration of the world is to be overthrown, there will none of that glory come to Him out of human sinfulness which the gainsayer of our text pleads in mitigation of human sinfulness.

This Paul might have said. But it is instructive to perceive, that instead of this he satisfies himself with simply affirming the first principles of the question. He counts it enough barely to state, that if there were anything in the reasoning of his opponent, then God's right of judging the world would be taken away. He holds this to be a full condemnation of the whole sophistry, that—if it were admitted—how then could God judge the world? With the announcement of what is plain to a man of plain understanding does he silence an argument which can only proceed from a man of subtle understanding. And in reply to the maxim, 'let us do evil that good may come,' he enters into no depths of jurisprudence or moral argumentation upon the subject; but simply affirms that the condemnation of all who should do so were a righteous condemnation.

It is not for us to enter on the philosophy of any subject upon which Paul does not enter. But we may at least remark, that this treatment of his adversaries by the apostle is consonant with the soundest maxims of philosophy. We know not a better way of characterizing the spirit of that sound and humble and sober philosophy which has conducted the human mind to its best acquisitions on the field of natural truth, than simply to say of it that it ever prefers the certainty of experience to the visions of a conjectural imagination—that it cautiously keeps within the line which separates the known from the unknown, and would never suffer a suspicion fetched from the latter region to militate against a plain certainty that stands clearly and obviously before it on the former region. And when it carries its attention from natural to moral science, it never will consent to a principle of sure and authoritative guidance for the heart and conduct of man in the present time being subverted by any difficulty drawn from a theme so inaccessible as the unrevealed purposes of God, or from a field of contemplation so remote as the glories which are eventually to redound to the character of God at the final winding up of His administration.

It is not for man to hold in abeyance the prompt decisions of

the moral sense, till he makes out an adjustment between them and such endless fancies as may be conjured up from the gulfs of misty and metaphysical speculation. Both piety and philosophy lend their concurrence to the truth that secret things belong to God, and revealed things only belong to us and to our children. He has written, not merely on the book of His revealed testimony, but He has written on the book of our own consciences the lesson, that He is rightfully the governor of the world, and that we are rightfully the subjects of that government. There is a monitor within, who with a still and a small but nevertheless a powerful voice, tells that if we disobey Him we do wrong. There is a voice of the heart which awards to Him the place of Sovereign, and to us the place of servants. If He ought not to judge, and may not impose the penalties of disobedience, this relationship is altogether dissolved. And it is too much for man to fetch, either from the aerial region that is above him, or from the dark and hidden futurity that is before him, a principle which would lay prostrate the authority of conscience, and infuse the baleful elements of darkness and distrust into its clearest intimations.

LECTURE X.

ROMANS III. 9-19.

“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.—Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.”

VER. 9.—‘Better,’ in respect of having a righteousness before God. We have before charged Jews and Gentiles with being under sin. We affirmed it to their own conscience. We now prove it to the Jews from their own revelation. The following is the paraphrase of this passage:—

‘What then? are we Jews better than those Gentiles in respect of our justification by our own obedience? Not at all—for we before charged both Jews and Gentiles with being under sin. And we prove it from God’s written revelation, where it is affirmed that there is none who has a righteousness that He will accept—not even one. There is none who is thus satisfied with himself and feels no need of such a justification as we propose, that really understandeth or truly seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way and have become unprofitable, and there is none of them who doeth what is substantially and religiously good—no, not one. From their mouths there proceedeth every abomination; and they speak deceitfully with their tongues; and the poison of malignity distils from their lips; and their mouth is full of imprecation upon others, and of bitterness against them. And they not only speak mischief but they do it, for they eagerly run to the shedding of blood; and their way may be tracked, as it were, by the destruction and the wretchedness which mark the progress of it; and they know not and love not the way of peace; and as to the fear of God, He is not looked to or regarded by them. Now all this is charged upon men by

the book of the Jewish law. We are only repeating quotations out of their own Scriptures, and as what the law saith is intended for those who are under the law, and not for those who are strangers to it and beyond the reach of its announcements—all these sayings must be applied to Jews; and they prove that it is not the mere possession of a law but the keeping of it which secures the justification of those over whom it has authority. Their mouths, therefore, must also be stopped; and the whole world, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, must all be brought in as guilty before God.'

We here remark, in the first place, that Paul had already in the second chapter affirmed the guilt of the Jews, and condescended upon the instances of it. He can scarcely be said to have proved their guilt; he had only charged them with it; and yet through the conscience of those whom we address, it is very possible that a charge may no sooner be uttered than a conviction on the part of those against whom we are directing the charge may come immediately on the back of it. There is often a power in a bare statement which is not at all bettered but rather impaired by the accompaniment of reasoning. If what you say of a man agree with his own bosom experience that it is really so, there is a weight in your simple affirmation which needs not the enforcing of any argument. It is this which gives such authority even still to those sermons that recommend themselves to the conscience; and it was this in fact which gained more credit and acceptance for the apostles than did all their miracles. They revealed to men the secrets of their own hearts, and what the inspired teacher said they were they felt themselves to be; and nothing brings so ready and entire a homage to the truth that is spoken as the agreement of its simple assertions with the finding of a man's own conscience. This manifestation of the truth unto the conscience, which was the grand instrument of discipleship in the first ages of the Church, is the grand instrument still; and it is thus that an unlearned hearer, if he but know his own mind, may be touched as effectually to his conviction, by the accordancy between what a preacher says and what he himself feels, as the most profound and philosophical member of an accomplished congregation. And thus that obstinacy of unbelief which we vainly attempt to carry by the power of any elaborate or metaphysical demonstration, may give way both with the untaught and the cultivated to the bare statement of the preacher—when he simply avers the selfishness of the

human heart, and its pride, and its sensuality, and above all its ungodliness.

But Paul is not satisfied with this alone. He refers the Jews to their own Scriptures. He deals out quotations, chiefly taken from the book of Psalms; and in so doing he avails himself of what both he and the other apostles felt to be a peculiarly fit and proper instrument of conviction in their various reasonings with the children of Israel. You meet with this style of argumentation on many distinct occasions, and often ushered in with the phrase, 'as it is written.' It was thus that Christ expounded to His disciples what was written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Him; and that these disciples again went forth upon the Jews armed for their intellectual warfare out of the Old Testament. In almost every interview they had with the Hebrews you will meet with this as a peculiarity which is not to be observed when epistles are addressed or conversations are held with Gentiles only. Thus Stephen gave a long demonstration to his persecutors out of the Jewish history, and Peter rested his argument for Jesus Christ on the interpretation that he gave of one of the prophetic psalms; and Paul, in his sermon at Antioch, went back to the story of Egyptian bondage, and carried his explanation downwards through David and his family to the doctrine of the remission of sins by the Saviour, who sprang from him; and in the Jewish synagogue at Thessalonica did he reason with them three sabbath-days out of the Scriptures; and before the judgment-seat of Felix did he aver that his belief in Jesus of Nazareth was that of one who believed all the things that are written in the law and in the prophets; and in arguing the cause of Christianity before Agrippa did he rest his vindication on what Agrippa knew of the promises that were found in the Old Testament; and when he met his countrymen at Rome it was his employment—from morning to evening—to persuade them concerning Jesus both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets. He who was all things to all men was a Jew among the Jews. He reasoned with them on their own principles, and nowhere more frequently than in this Epistle to the Romans—where, though he had previously spoken of their sinfulness to their own conscience, he yet adds a number of deposing testimonies to the same effect from their own book of Revelation.

It is this agreement between the Bible and a man's own conscience which stamps upon the book of God one of its most

satisfying evidences. It is this perhaps more than anything else which draws the interest and the notice of men towards it. For after all, there is no way of fixing the attention of man so powerfully as by holding up to him a mirror of himself; and no wisdom which he more prizes, or to which he bows more profoundly, than that which, by its piercing and intelligent glance, can open to him the secrecies of his own heart, and force him to recognise a marvellous accordancy between its positions and all the varieties of his own intimate and home-felt experience.

The question then before us is—Does the passage now read bear such an accordancy with the real character of man as that to which we are now alluding? It abounds in affirmations of sweeping universality, and a test of their truth or of their falsehood is to be found in every heart. The apostle has here made a most adventurous commitment of himself—for however much he may have asserted about matters that lay beyond the limits of human experience without the hazard of being confronted, the matters which he has here touched upon all lie within the familiar and well-known chambers of a man's own consciousness. And the positive announcements that he has made are not of some but of all individuals—so that could a single specimen be discovered of a natural man who was righteous, and who had the fear of God before his eyes, and who either understood or sought after Him, and who was free of all malignity and cruelty and censoriousness—then would this be a refutation in fact of what the apostle assumes and pronounces in argument; and though it requires a minute and multiform and unexpected agreement between the book of revelation and the book of experience to make out an evidence in behalf of the former—yet would one single case of disagreement be enough to overthrow all its pretensions, and to depose the apostles and evangelists of Christianity from all the credit which they have ever held in the estimation of the world.

You know that the apostle's aim in the whole of this argument is to secure the reception of his own doctrine; and that for this purpose he is addressing himself to those who need to be convinced, and are therefore not yet convinced of it. They who have actually submitted themselves to the truth which he is urging, and have come under its influence, have arrived at the very understanding of God which he is labouring to establish. These are in the way to which he is attempting to recall the whole human race, and must therefore be excepted from the

charge of being now out of the way. There are many such under the new dispensation; and there were some such under the old who must also be regarded as being on the side of the apostle, but of whom the apostle affirms, as he does of every one else, that ere they came over to that side they realized in their own persons the sad picture which he draws in this place of human degradation. The truth is, that there were men even of the Old Testament age who were within the pale of the gospel; and of whom in consequence it cannot be affirmed that they exemplified the description which is here set before us. But though from the nature of the case such a withdrawal must be conceded in behalf of those who are under the gospel, we are prepared to assert that the inspired writer has not overcharged the account that he has given of the depravity of those who are under law—whether it be the law of conscience, or of Moses, or even of the purer morality of Christ—inasmuch that all who refuse the mysteries of His grace are universally in the wrong: And if they who are believers—still a very little flock—are regarded as constituting the Church, and they who are not believers—still a vast and overbearing majority—are regarded as constituting the world, then is it true that, from one end to the other of it, it lieth in wickedness, and that all the world is guilty before God.

Be assured then that there is a delusion in all the complacency that you associate with your own righteousness. It is the want of a godly principle which essentially vitiates the whole: And additional to this, with all the generousities and all the equities which have done so much for your reputation among men, there is a selfishness that lurks in your bosom, or a vanity that swells and inflames it, or a preference of your own object to that of others which may lead you to acts or words of unfeeling severity, or a regard for some particular gratification, coupled with a regardlessness of every interest which lieth in its way—that may render you, in the estimation of Him who pondereth the heart, as remote a wanderer from rectitude as he on the path of whose visible history there occurred in other times the atrocities of savage cruelty and savage violence. It were barbarous to tell you so, had we no remedy to offer for that moral disease which so taints—and without exception too—all the families of our species. Life has much to vex and to trouble it, and the heart is sadly plied with the visitations of sorrow; and its very sensibilities, which open up for it the avenues of enjoyment, expose

it ere long to the heavier distress ; and the friends who in other years gladdened the walk of our daily history have left us unsupported and alone in the midst of a toilsome pilgrimage. And it were really cruel to add to the pressure of a creature so beset and borne in upon by telling him of his worthlessness—did we not stand before him charged with the tidings of his possible renovation to the high prospects of a virtuous and holy immortality. Let him therefore cast the burden of his despondency away ; and if there be a novelty in the views that have been offered of his present condition, let it but allure him to further inquiry ; and if any conviction have mingled with the exercise, let him betake himself to the great fountain-head of inspiration ; and if he have found no rest in all his former unceasing attempts after happiness, let him try the new enterprise of becoming wise unto salvation. Should this Bible be his guide, and prayer his habitual employment, and the great sacrifice, with the intimation of which Paul followed up his humiliating exposure of the wickedness of man, be his firm dependence—with these new elements of thought, and this new region of anticipation before him, he will reach a peace that the world knoweth not, and he will attain in Christ a comfort that he never yet has gotten in any quarter of contemplation to which he has turned himself ; and this kind Saviour, touched with a fellow-feeling for his sorrows, both knows and is willing to succour him, so as to replace even in this world all the desolations that he now mourns over, and at length to bear him in triumph to that unfading country where there is no sorrow and no separation.¹

¹ Our more copious illustration of this passage is to be found in the Fifteenth of the 'Commercial Discourses' already referred to ; and which, therefore, we have not repeated in this place.

LECTURE XI.

ROMANS III 20-26.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets ; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe ; (for there is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God :) being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness ; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

THERE is perhaps no single passage in the Book of inspiration which reveals in a way so formal and authoritative as the one before us the path of transition by which a sinner passes from a state of wrath to a state of acceptance. There is no passage—to which if we would only bring the docility and the compliance of childhood—that is more fitted to guide and to turn an inquiring sinner into the way of peace. Let the light which makes apparent to the soul only shine upon these verses, and there is laid before the man who questions what it is that he must do to be saved, the great link of communication on which he may be led along from the ground of fearful exposure that nature occupies to the ground of a secure and lasting reconciliation. Let him lay aside his own wisdom and submit himself to the word of the testimony that is here presented to his notice ; and taught in the true wisdom of God he will indeed become wise unto salvation. It is an overture of God's own making, and directly applicable to the question of dispute that there is between Him and the men who have offended Him. It is His own setting forth of the way in which He would have the difference to be adjusted ; nor can we perceive how defenceless creatures, standing on the brink of an eternity for which they have no provision, and which nevertheless all of them must enter and abide upon for ever, ought to have their attention more arrested, and their feelings more engrossed and solemnized, than by the communication of the apostle in this verse, and by the unfoldings of that embassy of peace that is here so simply and so truly set before us.

The apostle has by this time well-nigh finished his demonstration of human sinfulness ; and he makes use of such terms as go to fasten the charge of guilt, not in that way of vague and inapplicable generality from which it is so easy for each man to escape the sense of his own personal danger and the remorse of his own individual conscience, but as go to fasten the charge on every single member or descendant of the great human family. There is a method of blunting the edge of conviction, by interpreting in a kind of corporate and collective way all that is said by the apostle about the sinfulness of Jews on the one hand, and of Gentiles on the other ; but let each of us only review his past life, or enter with the light of self-examination into the chambers of his own heart, and he will feel himself to be addressed by the phrase of "whosoever thou art, O man ;" and he will feel that in the clause of "every mouth being stopped," his own mouth should be stopped also ; and he will consent that he, a native of our world, has a part in the apostle's asseveration about all the world being guilty before God ; and he will readily accord with the Bible in that, whereas he is a partaker of flesh and blood, he offers no exception to the averment that in the sight of God and by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified.

It is through want of faith that we are blind to the reality of the gospel ; and it is also through want of faith that we are blind to the reality of the law. The generality of readers see not any significancy in the apostle's words, because they feel not any sense of the things that are expressed by it. They are just as dead to the terrors of the law as they are to the offers and invitations of the gospel. The sense of God pursuing them with the exactions of an authority that He will not let down is just as much away from their feelings as the sense of God in Christ beseeching them to flee for refuge to the hope set before them. The man who is surrounded by an opaque partition which limits his view to the matters that lie within the region of carnality, and hides from him alike the place of condemnation and the place of deliverance that lie beyond it, may enjoy a peace that is without disturbance, because, though he had no positive hope from the gospel, he has no positive apprehension from the law. He is alike insensible to both ; and not till, through an opening in that screen which hides from nature the dread and important certainties that are lying in reserve for all her children, he is made to perceive that God's truth and righteousness are out against him, will he appreciate the revelation of that great

mystery by which it is made known how truth and mercy have met together, and how righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Let us now proceed to the exposition of this passage.

Mark in the twentieth verse how this question is treated as one between God and man. It is not that one man may not be justified in the sight of another—may not have fulfilled all that the other has a right to expect; but the question is about justification in the sight of God. It is a judicial proceeding before God.

Ver. 21.—A 'righteousness without the law' is simply a righteousness which we obtain without having fulfilled that law in our own persons. Paul never loses the advantage of any testimony that is given to the doctrine of Christ out of the Jewish Scriptures; and while he therefore raises against himself the opposition of the great majority of his countrymen by asserting a righteousness that was arrived at in some other way than through the path of obedience to their law, yet he does not omit the opportunity of trying to disarm this opposition, by avouching that this very righteousness was borne witness to by the law and the prophets. The testimonies of the prophets are various and abundant on this topic. For a view of the testimonies of the law we refer you to Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews.

Ver. 22.—The righteousness which is proposed by the apostle as that which alone is valid to the object of justification is called by him the righteousness of God. It is that the acceptance of which does not dishonour Him. It is that which He Himself has provided, and which He bestows as a grant to all who will. We cannot speak too plainly about an alternative on which there hinges the whole eternity of a sinner. Conceive the sinner to draw nigh in the imagination of his own merits, God says to him, 'I cannot receive you upon this footing; but here is a righteousness which I hold out to you, wrought not by yourself, but by my Son, and I now ask your consent that you be clothed upon therewith. Come to me, consenting to be so clothed upon, and I take you into full reconciliation.'—'Unto all.' The offer of this righteousness is unto all; and the righteousness itself is upon all who believe. Their belief constitutes their acceptance of the thing offered; and what was formerly theirs in offer, becomes by their faith theirs in possession.—'No difference.' There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, seeing that all have sinned; and there is as little difference in respect of the way in which all may be justified.

Ver. 23.—Come short of glorifying God—‘When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God;’ and they are alike short of having wherewith to glory of before God. Even Abraham had nothing to glory of before God; and of consequence no claim or title to be glorified by God.

Ver. 24.—You understand that the term ‘justify’ signifies not to make a man righteous in personal character, but to hold and declare him righteous in point of law. We have already explained that it is to be understood forensically. We here understand that this justification is not wrought for, but given—and given freely. It is not a purchase, but a present. It is given by grace, which is just saying that it is given gratis. When we say that it is not a purchase, we mean that it is not purchased by ourselves. Still, however, it was purchased, but by another. To redeem is to recover what is lost, but by rendering an adequate price for it. We had lost righteousness in the sight of God. Jesus Christ redeemed the righteousness that we had lost. He gave the price for it; and we are freely offered of that thing which is the fruit of His purchase.

Ver. 25.—‘Set forth’—exhibited. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Set forth before the eyes. The term ‘propitiation’ is the same with what in the Old Testament is translated mercy-seat. On the great day of atonement it was sprinkled with the blood of an appointed sacrifice. “And there I will meet thee,” says God to Moses, “and will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat.” It rather, however, signifies the offering itself than the place in which the blood of the offering was sprinkled. You know what it is to make the Being whom you have offended propitious. The propitiation is the offering by which propitiousness is obtained. Jesus Christ, in dying, rendered a propitiation for the sins of the world; and you in particular have the benefit of this propitiation: He becomes your propitiation upon your having faith in His blood. There is a general faith which respects the whole testimony of God, that, if true and not counterfeit, will also respect all the particulars of that testimony. Still, however, there is a danger in connecting our reconciliation with this general faith; for there may be a delusive vagueness you will observe in the matter, and the attention may fail to be exercised on that distinct truth with which reconciliation has most expressly and immediately to do. Let it be well remarked, then, that in this verse propitiation is said to be through faith in His blood. There is an appropriate-

ness of this kind kept up in God's dealings with us. Through faith in the blood of Christ we obtain that redemption which is through this blood, even the forgiveness of sin. It is through faith in God's promise of the Holy Spirit that we shall, upon asking Him, receive the Holy Spirit. This latter act of faith brings down upon us the benefit of which it is the object, even the Spirit, as the former act of faith brings down upon us the benefit of which it is the object, even the washing away of our guilt in the blood of the Lamb. As is the faith, so is the fulfilment. Our Saviour did not ask the blind men, Believe ye that I am able to do all things? but, Believe ye that I am able to do this thing? And upon their replying, Yes, He touched their eyes and said, According to your faith so be it done unto you—and their eyes were opened. The man who has the faith that he will get the spirit of charity, and prays accordingly, though he should get forgiveness on the back of his prayer, is not getting according to that faith. The man who has the faith that Christ's Spirit can sanctify him, and prays for it, though he should get forgiveness on the back of his prayer, is not getting according to that faith. But the man who has the faith that the blood of Christ can wash away guilt, and prays that in this blood his guilt may be washed away, and on the back of his prayer is accepted in the Beloved and for His sake, he is getting precisely according to his faith. And thus it is that there is an accordancy between the benefits of faith and the particular truths of revelation which faith has respect unto, when it brings down these benefits upon the believer. Faith has been compared by some theologians to the bunch of hyssop, and the blood of Christ is called the 'blood of sprinkling.'

'For'—as to—the remission of sins that are past. To declare His righteousness in the having remitted by His forbearance the sins of the ages that are past.

Ver. 26.—It is at this time that God hath set Him forth. He now shows what was before hidden from the prophets. In the fulness of time Christ is now manifested. It was a mystery in former ages how a holy God could pardon. This is now declared; and it is now made manifest that God might be just while He justifies those who believe in Jesus.

The following is the paraphrase of this passage :—

'Therefore no individual shall work out a righteousness that justifies him by his doing of the law; for the law makes his sin manifest. But now, in lack of this righteousness of man, there

is manifested a righteousness of God—not consisting of our obedience to the law, though both the law and the prophets bear witness to it; this is that righteousness of God which is received by our faith in Christ Jesus, which is offered unto all, and actually conferred on all without distinction who believe. For all have sinned, and come short of rendering glory to God; and none are therefore justified in the way of reward, but receive justification as a gift of kindness out of that which has been purchased for us by Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; and this to declare the righteousness of God in His having forborne to punish the sins of those who were forgiven in former ages of the world—to declare this righteousness to us now, and so make it manifest that it was not merely a kind and a compassionate but also a just thing in God to justify him who believeth in Jesus.'

The first lesson that we should like to urge upon you from this passage is the gospel doctrine of our acceptance with God in all the strict entireness and purity of its terms. There is nothing which so much darkens the mind of an inquirer, and throws such a cloudiness over the simple announcements that God has made to us, as the tendency of a legal spirit to mix up the doings of the creature with the free grace and mercy of the Creator. Take up with it as an absolute truth that the law has condemned you. Be very sure that this is the sentence which is in force against even the most virtuous and upright of the species. Do not try to mitigate the evils of your condition, or to blunt the edge and application of the law as having pronounced a destroying sentence upon your person, by alleging any extenuation of your offences, or any number of actual conformities. You have broken the law in one point, have you not? So only has the assassin done in respect to the law of his country. His execution is the legal consequence of his guilt; and thus too it is that your guilt is carried out to its legal consequence. It will be better therefore for you that you regard yourself as under the law to be wholly undone. If you do not, you will keep out from your mind the whole clearness and comfort of the gospel. If you admit any merit, or any innocence of your own, among the ingredients of your security before God—then all is thrown back again upon a questionable and precarious and uncertain foundation. The controversy between God and man is awakened up anew by such a proceeding. You are again consigned as before among the old elements of doubt

and distrust ; and the question—What degree of comparative innocence is enough to admit your own righteousness into the plea of justification before God ? will, by its ambiguous and unresolvable nature, remove you as far from any solid ground of dependence as if there was no righteousness of another in which you might appear, and as if no propitiation had been made for you. If you want peace to your own minds, and a release to yourself from all its perplexities—better that you discard all the items of your own personal merit from the account of your acceptance with God. Go not to obliterate that clear line of demarcation which the apostle has drawn between salvation by works and salvation by grace, and which he proposes to us as the only two terms of an alternative which cannot be compounded together—but of which if the one be chosen the other must be entirely rejected. The foundation of your trust before God must either be your own righteousness out and out, or the righteousness of Jesus Christ out and out. To attempt a composition of them is to lean on a foundation of which many of the materials may be solid, but many of them also are brittle, and all of them are frailly cemented together with untempered mortar. If you are to lean upon your own merit, lean upon it wholly—if you are to lean upon Christ, lean upon Him wholly. The two will not amalgamate together ; and it is the attempt to do so which keeps many a weary and heavy-laden inquirer at a distance from rest and at a distance from the truth of the gospel. Maintain a clear and a consistent posture. Stand not before God with one foot upon a rock and the other upon a treacherous quicksand. And it is not your humility alone which we want to inspire—it is the stable peace of your hearts that we are consulting when we tell you that the best use you can make of the law is to shut your mouth when it offers to speak in the language of vindication ; and to let its requirements on the one hand, and your rebellion on the other, give you the conviction of sin.

In stepping over from the law as a ground of meritorious acceptance, step over from it wholly. Make no reservations. You are aware of the strenuousness with which Paul, in his Epistle to the Galatians, warded off the rite of circumcision from the Church. He would admit of no compromise between one basis of acceptance and another. This were inserting a flaw and a false principle into the principle of our justification ; and to import the element of falsehood were to import the ele-

ment of feebleness. We call upon you not to lean so much as the weight of one grain or scruple of your confidence upon your own doings—to leave this ground entirely, and to come over entirely to the ground of a Redeemer's blood and a Redeemer's righteousness. Then you may stand firm and erect on a foundation strong enough and broad enough to bear you. You will feel that your feet are on a sure place; and we know nothing that serves more effectually to clear and disembarass the mind of an inquirer from all its perplexities, than when the provinces of the law and the gospel, instead of mingling and mutually encroaching the one upon the other, come to be seen in all the distinctness of their character and offices. The law ministers condemnation and nothing else. The gospel, by its own unaided self, ministers that righteousness which finds acceptance with God. God has simply set forth Christ to be a propitiation. You have to look upon Him as such, and He becomes your propitiation. Make no doubt of its being an honest exhibition which God makes of His Son. It is not an exhibition by which He intends to deceive you. And great will be your peace when thus drawn away from yourself and drawn towards the Saviour. It will be the commencement of a trust that will establish the heart in comfort; and though a mystery which cannot be demonstrated to the world, it will be the experience of every true believer that it is the commencement of an affection which will establish the heart in the love and in the habit of holiness.

LECTURE XII.

ROMANS III. 27-31.

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law."

THE term 'law' may often be taken in a more general acceptation than that of an authoritative rule for the observation of those who are subject to it. It may signify the method of succession by which one event follows another—either in the moral or in the physical world; and it is thus that we speak of a law of nature, or a law of the human mind, thereby denoting the train or order of certain consecutive facts which maintain an unvarying dependence among themselves. Both the law of works and the law of faith, though the judicial character of God is strongly evinced in the establishment of them, may be understood here in this latter sense which we have just now explained. The law of works is that law by which the event of a man's justification follows upon the event of his having performed these works. The law of faith is that law by which the event of a man's justification follows upon the event of his faith—just as the law of gravitation is that law upon which every body above the surface of the earth, when its support is taken away, will fall towards its centre; and as the law of refraction is that upon which every ray of light, when it passes obliquely from air into water, is bent from the direction which it had formerly.

Ver. 29.—It is good, for the purpose of keeping up in your mind the concatenation that obtains between one part of the epistle and the other, to mark every recurrence of similar terms which takes place in the prosecution of its argument. He had in the second chapter made a pointed address to the Jew, who rested in the law, and made his boast of God. He now excludes his boasting; and in doing so reduces the Jew and the Gentile to the same condition of relationship to God.

Ver. 30.—The term ‘one’ may either be taken numerically or refers to the unity and unchangeableness of God’s purpose.

By a preceding verse the works of the law are set aside in the matter of our justification. And it comes in as an appropriate question—Is the law made void through this? What would have been consequent upon obedience to the law is now made consequent upon faith; and does this nullify the law? No: it will be found that it serves to establish the law; securing all the honour which is due to the Lawgiver, perpetuating the obligation and authority of the law itself, and introducing into the heart of the believer such new principles of operation as to work conformity between the law of God and the life of man—a conformity that is ever making progress here, and will at length be perfected hereafter.

The passage now expounded scarcely requires any paraphrastic elucidation at all—yet agreeably to our practice we shall still offer one:—

‘Where is boasting then? It is excluded. In what method?—By the method of justification through works? No: it is by the method of justification through faith. But if works had any part in our justification there would still be room for boasting—and we must therefore conclude, since boasting is done away, that they have no part at all—and that man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is He only the God of the Jews? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: seeing that He the same God dispenses justification to both in the same way; that is, justifying the circumcision by faith and also the uncircumcision by faith. Do we then make the law void through faith? By no means: we rather establish the law.’

We now proceed as usual to press upon you any such lessons as may be extracted from the passage of the day.

And first, you know it to be a frequent evasion on the part of those who dislike the utter excluding of works from that righteousness which justifies a sinner before God, that they hold the affirmation of Paul upon the subject to be of the ceremonial and not of the moral law. They are willing enough to discard obedience to the former, but not obedience to the latter, as having any efficacy in justification. And they will further acknowledge that they have a much higher esteem for the latter than for the former; that they think greatly better of the man who has the rectitudes of morality to signalize his character, than of the man

who has only the ritual observations of a punctual and prescribed ceremonial to signalize his character; that all rites—be they Jewish or Christian—have a greatly inferior place in their estimation to the virtues of social life, or to the affections of an inward and enlightened piety—insomuch that should there stand before them an individual of fidelity incorruptible, and of honour fearless and unspotted, and of humanity ever breathing the desires of kindness and ever busying itself with deeds of kindness in behalf of our species, and of patriotism linking all its energies with the good of his native land, and of gentleness shedding its mild and pleasing lustre over the walks of private companionship, and of affection kindling its still more intense and exquisite charm in the bosom of his home—why, there would not be one moment's hesitation with them, whether the homage of their reverential and regardful feelings were more due to such an individual, even though a stranger to the puritanical rigours of the Sabbath and of the sacrament;—or to him who, trenched in the outward regularities of worship and of ordinance, had less of the graces and fewer of the honesties of character to adorn him—and you can well anticipate the reply to the question, Which of the two had the more to boast of—the man of social worth or the man of saintly exterior?

We are far from disputing the justness of their preference for the former of these two men; but we would direct them to the use that they should make of this preference—when turning to its rightful and consistent application the statement of our apostle, that from the affair of our justification all boasting is excluded. We ask them upon a reference to their own principles and feelings, whether this assertion of the inspired teacher points more to the exclusion of the moral or of the ceremonial law? Is it not the fair and direct answer, that it points the more to that of which men are inclined to boast the more? To set aside the law of works in the matter of our justification is not to exclude boasting at all—if it be only those works that are excluded which beget no reverence when done by others, and no complacency when done by themselves. The exclusion of boasting might appear to the mind of an old Pharisee as that which went to sweep away the whole ceremonial in which he gloried. But for the very same reason might it appear to the mind of him who is a tasteful admirer of virtue to sweep away the moral accomplishments in which he glories. To him, in fact, the ceremonial law—in which he has no disposition to boast whatever—is not

so touched by the affirmation of the apostle, as the moral law on which alone he would ground a boastful superiority of himself over others. The thing which is shut out here from the office of justification is that thing which excites boasting in man. Carry this verse to the Jew who vaunted himself that he gave tithes and fasted twice in the week ; and these are the observances which, as to any power of justifying, are here done away. Carry this verse to the man who stands exalted over his fellows, either by the integrities which direct or by the kind humanities which adorn him ; and these are the virtues which as to their power of justifying are just as conclusively done away. Whatever you are most disposed to boast of, it is that upon which the sentence of expulsion most pointedly and most decisively falls ; and the ground of a Pharisee's dependence on his conformities to the ceremonial law, is not more expressly cast away by this passage—than is the ground of his dependence, who in our own more refined and cultivated age would place his dependence before God on these moralities which to him are the objects of a far more enlightened admiration, and of a far juster and truer complacency.

It is thus that the towering pretensions even of the most moral and enlightened of our sages in modern days may be utterly overthrown. If there was then a greater tendency to boast of ceremonial observations, then was the righteousness of the ceremonial law most severely struck at by the apostle as having no place in our justification. But if there be now a greater tendency to boast of moral observations, now is the righteousness of the moral law most pointedly the object of his attack, as out of propriety and of place in the matter of our justification. In a word, this verse has the same power and force of conclusion still that it had then. It then reduced the boastful Jew to the same ground of nothingness before God as the Gentile whom he despised. And it now reduces the eloquent expounder of human virtue to the same ground with that drivelling slave of rites and punctualities whom he so tastefully, and from the throne of his mental superiority, so thoroughly despises—shutting in fact every mouth, and making the righteousness of all before God not a claim to be challenged, but a gift to be humbly and thankfully accepted of from His hands.

This is far from the only passage, however, which excludes the moral as well as the ceremonial law from any standing in the province of our justification. In many places it is said that

our justification is not of works in the general—and without any addition of the term ‘law’ at all, to raise the question whether it be the moral or ceremonial law that is intended. And in the preceding part of the epistle they are moral violations which are chiefly instanced, for the purpose of making it out that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified. In the theft and adultery and sacrilege of the second chapter, and in the impiety and deceit and slander and cruelty of the third, we see that it was the moral law and the offence of a guilty world against it which the apostle chiefly had in his eye ; and when, as the end of all this demonstration, he comes to the conclusion of the world’s guilt—why should we restrict the apostle, as if he only meant to exclude the ceremonial law from the office of justifying ? When he says that by the law is the knowledge of sin, is it the ceremonial law only that is intended—when in fact they were moral sins that he had all along been specifying ? Or is it the sole purpose of the apostle to humble those who made their boast of the ceremonial law—when he instances how the law administered to himself the conviction of his sinfulness, by fastening upon the tenth commandment, and telling us that he had not been criminal, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet ? What do you make of the passage where it is said that we are saved “not by works of righteousness which we have done ?” Does not this include all doings, be they of a moral or be they of a ceremonial character ? And in the verses which immediately precede this quotation from Titus, whether think you was the moral or the ceremonial law most in the apostle’s head—when, in alleging the worthlessness of all the previous doings of his own converts, he charged them with serving divers lusts and pleasures, and with living in malice and envy—hateful and hating one another ? This distinction between the moral and ceremonial is in fact a mere device for warding off a doctrine by which alienated nature feels herself to be pained and humbled and revolted in all ages of the world. It is an opiate by which she would fain regale the lingering sense that she so fondly retains of her own sufficiency. It is laying hold of a twig by which she may bear herself up in her own favourite attitude of independence upon God ; and gladly would she secure the reservation of some merit to herself, and of some contributions out of her own treasury to the achievement of her own justification. But this is a propensity to which the apostle grants no quarter and no indulgence whatever. Whenever it appears, he is sure to

appear in unsparing hostility against it; and never will your mind and the mind of the inspired teacher be at one, till reduced to a sense of your own nothingness, and leaning your whole weight on the sufficiency of another—you receive justification as wholly of grace, and feel on this ground that every plea of boasting is overthrown.

We may here notice another shift by which nature tries to ease herself of a conclusion so mortifying. She will at times allow justification to be of faith wholly; but then she will make a virtue of her faith. All the glorying that she would have associated with her obedience to the law she would now transfer to her acquiescence in the gospel. The docility, and the attention, and the love of truth, and the preference of light to that darkness which they only choose whose deeds are evil—these confer in her fond estimation a merit upon believing; and here therefore would she make a last and a desperate stand for the credit of a share in her own salvation.

If the verse under consideration be true, there must be an error in this imagination also. It leaves the sinner nothing to boast of at all; and should he continue to associate any glorying with his faith, then is he turning this faith to a purpose directly the reverse of that which the apostle intends by it.

There is no glory to yourself, you will allow, in seeing—with your eyes open—that sun which stands visibly before you, whatever glory may accrue to Him who arrayed this luminary in his brightness, and endowed you with that wondrous mechanism which conveys the perception of it. There is no part of the glory of a gift ascribed to the mendicant, who simply looks to it—whatever praise of generosity may be rendered to him who is the giver; or still more to Him who hath conferred upon the hand its moving power, and upon the eye its seeing faculty. And even though the beggar should be told to wait another day, and then to walk to some place of assignation, and there to obtain the princely donation that was at length to elevate his family to a state of independence—in awarding the renown that was due upon such a transaction, would it not be the munificence of the dispenser that was held to be all in all; and who would ever think of lavishing one fraction of acknowledgment, either upon the patience, or upon the exertion, or upon the faith of him who was the subject of all this liberality? And be assured that in every way there is just as little to boast of on the part of him who sees the truth of the gospel, or who labours to come within

sight of it, or who relies on its promises after he perceives them to be true. His faith—which has been aptly termed the hand of the mind—may apprehend the offered gift and may appropriate it; but there is just as little of moral praise to be rendered to him on that account as to the beggar for laying hold of the offered alms. It is with the man whom the gospel has relieved of his debt as it is with the man whom the gold of a generous benefactor has relieved of his. There is nothing in the shape of glory that is due at all to the receiver; and nothing could ever have conjured up such an imagination but the delusive feeling that cleaves to nature of her own sufficiency. There is not one particle of honour due to the sinner in this affair; and all the blessing and honour and glory of it must be rendered to Him, who in the face of His manifold provocations, and when He might have illustrated both the power of His anger and the triumphs of His justice, gave way to the movements of a compassion that is infinite; and had with wisdom unsearchable to find out a channel of conveyance by which—in consistency with the glory of such attributes and with the principles of such a government as are unchangeable—He might call His strayed children back again to the arms of an offered reconciliation, and lavish on all who come the gift of a free pardon in time and a full perfection of happiness through eternity.

And to cut away all pretensions to glorying on the score of faith—the faith itself is a gift. The gospel is like an offer made to one who has a withered hand, and power must go forth with the offer ere the hand can be extended to take hold of it. The capacity of simply laying hold of the covenant of peace is as much a grant as is the covenant itself. The helpless and the weary sinner who has looked so fruitlessly after the faith which is unto salvation, knows that the faculty of seeing with his mind is just as necessary to him as is the truth itself which is addressed to it. He knows that it is not enough for God to present him with an object—He must also awaken his eye to the perception of it. And let him who wants the faith cavil as he may in the vain imagination of a sufficiency that he would still reserve for man in the matter of his redemption—certain it is that he who has the faith sees the hand of God both in conferring it at the first and in keeping it up afterwards; and thankful both for the splendour of his hopes and for the faculty of seeing it, his is an unmingled sentiment of humility and gratitude to the Being who has called him out of darkness into the marvellous light of the gospel.

LECTURE XIII.

ROMANS IV. 1-8.

“What shall we then say that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found?

For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

PAUL never forgets in the course of this argument that he is addressing himself to Jews; and bred as he was in all their prejudices, he evinces a strong and a ready sense of the antipathies that he would ever and anon be stirring up in their minds by the doctrine on which he expatiated. He knew how much they all gloried in Abraham, and how natural it was for them therefore to feel that Abraham had something to glory of in himself; and as he urged that faith which excludes boasting, the case of the patriarch occurred to him; nor could he have selected a better than that of one so eminently the favourite of God as he was, for illustrating the principle upon which God holds out friendship and acceptance to mankind.

Ver. 1.—The term ‘flesh’ does not stand related to the circumstance of Abraham being our father. It does not mean—What is it that Abraham, our father by earthly descent, hath found? but, What is it that Abraham our father hath found by his natural or external performances? Whatever can be done by the powers of nature can be done by the flesh. The outward observances of Judaism can be so done; and thus the Mosaic law is termed by Paul the law of a carnal commandment. In the question he puts to the Galatians—“Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” he is expostulating with those who thought that the rite of circumcision, one of the Jewish observances, was necessary to perfect their acceptance with God. Paul professes of himself that he gloried not in the flesh; and in enumerating the reasons which

might have led him so to glory, he refers not merely to his descent but to his circumcision, and to his pharisaical zeal, and to his blamelessness in regard to the righteousness of the law. Abraham had rites and performances laid on him, and he was punctual in their observation; and the question is, What did Abraham procure by these services?

Ver. 2.—If by these services he was justified, he has whereof to glory, whereof to boast himself. But no! his boasting too must be excluded. He has nothing whereof to glory before God.

Ver. 3.—Genesis xv. 6. This is said of Abraham, previously, by several years, to the institution of the great Jewish rite of circumcision. He was in favour with God before this deed of obedience. He was dealt with by God as a righteous person before this work of righteousness was done by him. God had declared Himself to be his reward; and by his trust in this declaration did he become entitled to the reward. This conferred on it the character of a gift; otherwise it would have been the payment of a debt, as of wages rendered for services performed.

Ver. 4.—It would not have been regarded as a gratuitous thing, but as a thing due.

Ver. 5.—Observe a few things here. The man who has obtained justification may be looked upon as in possession of a title-deed which secures to him a right to God's favour. The question is, How comes he into possession of this title-deed? Did he work for it, and thus receive it as a return for his works? No: he did not work for it; and thus it is that justification is to him who worketh not—that is, he did nothing antecedent to his justification to bring this privilege down upon him; and it is a contradiction to allow that it is by doing anything subsequent to justification that he secures this privilege, for it is secured already. He is now in possession of it—he has not to work for the purpose of obtaining what he already has. And neither did he work for it at the time that he had it not. He came to it not by doing but by believing. His is like the case of a man getting as a present the title to an estate. He did not work for it before it was presented, and so get it as a reward: it was a gift. He does not work for it after it is presented, for it is his already. But you must remark here—though it is not in consideration of works done either before or after the grant that the privilege was bestowed—yet that is not to say but that the person so privileged becomes a busy, diligent, ever-doing, and constantly working man. When it is said that the faith of him who worketh

not is counted for righteousness—it is meant that he does not work for the purpose of obtaining a right of acceptance, and that it is not upon the consideration of his works that this right has been conferred upon him. But it is not meant that such a person works not for any purpose at all. To recur to the case of him who has a gratuitous estate conferred upon him, he neither worked for the estate before he obtained it, nor for it after he has obtained it. But from the very moment of his assured prospect of coming into the possession of it, may he have become most zealously diligent in the business of preparing himself for the enjoyment of all the advantages, and the discharge of all the obligations connected with this property. He may have put himself under the tuition of him who perhaps at one time possessed it, and knew it thoroughly, and could instruct him how to make the most of it. He did not work for it; but now that he has got it, he has been set most busily a-working—though not for a right to the property, yet all for matters connected with the property. He may forthwith enter on a very busy process of education to render him meet for the society of those with whom he is now in kindred circumstances. And thus with the Christian, who by faith receives the gift of eternal life. It cannot be put down to the account of works done either before or after the deed of conveyance has passed into his hands. But no sooner does he lay hold of the deed than he begins, and that most strenuously, to qualify himself for the possession—to translate himself into the kindred character of Heaven—to wean himself away from the sin and the sordidness of a world which he no longer regards as his dwelling-place—and, with a foot which touches lightly that earth from which he is to ascend so soon into the fields of eternal glory that are above him, to aspire after the virtues which are current there; and by an active cultivation of his heart he labours to prepare himself for a station of happiness and honour among the companies of the celestial.

We would further have you to remark, that you must beware of having any such view of faith as will lead you to annex to it the kind of merit or of claim or of glorying under the gospel which are annexed to works under the law. This in fact were just animating with a legal spirit the whole phraseology and doctrine of the gospel. It is God who justifies. He drew up the title-deed and He bestowed the title-deed. It is ours simply by laying hold of it. The donor who grants a worldly estate to his friend counts his friend to have right enough to the property by

having received it. God, who offers us an inheritance of glory, counts us to have right enough to the possession of it by our relying on the truth and the honesty of the offer. Under the law, obedience would have been that personal thing in us which stood connected with our right to eternal life. Under the gospel, faith is that personal thing in us which stands connected with this right—but just as the act of stretching forth his hand to the offered alms is that personal doing of the mendicant that stands connected with his possession of the money received by him. Any other view of faith than that which excludes boasting must be altogether unscriptural and will mislead the inquirer, and may involve his mind in much darkness and in very serious difficulties. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?—of faith. It is of faith that it might be by grace—not that it might be a thing of merit, but a thing of freeness—a present: ‘Ye are saved by grace through faith.’ Conceive it a question, whether a dwelling-house is enlightened by a candle from within or by an open window? The answer may justly enough be that it is by the window—and yet the window does not enlighten the house. It is the sun which enlightens it. The window is a mere opening for the transmission of that which is from without. Christ hath wrought out a righteousness for us that is freely offered to us of God. By faith we discern the reality of this offer; and all that it does is to strike out, as it were, an avenue of conveyance by which the righteousness of another passes to us; and through faith are we saved by this righteousness.

Ver. 6-8.—They are Jewish authorities which Paul makes use of when he wants to school down Jewish antipathies—thus meeting his countrymen on their own ground; and never better pleased than when, on the maxim of ‘all things to all men,’ he can reconcile them to a doctrine which they hate by quoting in favour of it a testimony which they revere. Take sin in its most comprehensive sense, as including in it both the sin of omission and the sin of performance; and then the opposite to this, or sinlessness, will imply, not only that there has been no performance of what is wrong, but no omission of what is right. In this sense sinlessness is not a mere negation, but is fully equivalent to righteousness; and not to impute sin is tantamount to the imputation of righteousness. It is clear that the righteousness thus imputed, to which the Psalmist refers, was a righteousness without works—that is, without such works as could at all pretend to the character or to any of the claims of righteousness.

For what were the works of those who had this righteousness imputed to them? They were iniquities which had been forgiven, and sins which had been covered.

There are certain technical terms in theology which are used so currently, that they fail to impress their own meaning on the thinking principle. The term 'impute' is one of them. It may hold forth a revelation of its plain sense to you—when it is barely mentioned that the term 'impute' in the sixth verse is the same in the original with what is employed in that verse of Philemon where Paul says, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." To impute righteousness to a man without works, is simply to put righteousness down to his account—though he has not performed the works of righteousness.

The following is the paraphrase of the passage :—

'What shall we make then of our father Abraham; and how shall we estimate the amount of what he procured by those works of obedience which he rendered, and are still required of us by a law that lays such things upon us as we are naturally able to perform? For if Abraham did procure justification to himself by these works he hath something to glory of—though we have just now affirmed that all glorying is excluded. Our affirmation nevertheless stands good, for he hath nothing to glory of before God. And what saith the Scripture about this? Not that Abraham obeyed, and his obedience was counted; but Abraham believed God, and his belief was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh and getteth reward for it, reward is not a favour, but the payment of what is due. But it is to him who worketh—not for a right to acceptance, but believeth on Him who offereth this acceptance and justifieth the ungodly, that his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of him to whom God reckoneth a righteousness without works—saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are so hidden from remembrance, that they are no longer mentioned. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon the guilt of his sin.'

The first lesson we draw from this passage is one which we have often urged in your hearing; but aware of the difference that there is between the work of urging a principle for the moral purpose of influencing the heart, and the work of urging

a principle for the purpose of informing and rectifying the judgment, we do not feel it so much a vain repetition to come over and over the same thing for the one of these purposes as for the other of them. To say what is thoroughly apprehended already, and that for the purpose of informing the mind, were tiresome and inapplicable; but to say that which when present to the view of the understanding is fitted to work a spiritual impression, is for the purpose of stirring up the mind. And this may be done—not in the way of presenting it with novelties, but the mind may be so stirred up in the way of remembrance. And this, by the way, suggests to us a very useful test of distinction between one set of hearers and another, which may be turned by you all into a matter of self-application. The hearer whose main relish it is to regale his intellect—in his appetite for what is original and argumentative and variegated—will nauseate as tasteless and fatiguing the constant recurrence of the few but all-impressive simplicities of the gospel. The hearer whose ruling desire it is to refresh and to edify the spiritual life, will no more feel distaste to the nourishment that he has already taken in for the food of the soul, than to the nourishment that he has already and often taken in for the food of the body. The desire for the sincere milk of the word is not desire for amusement that he may gratify a thirst for speculation—but a desire for aliment that he may grow thereby. And thus it is, that what may be felt as insufferable sameness by him who roams with delight from one prospect and one eminence to another in the scholarship of Christianity, may in fact be the staple commodity of a daily and most wholesome ministration to him who, seeking like Paul for the practical objects of an acceptance and a righteousness with God, like him counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of the Saviour; and like him is determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

Let us not therefore be prevented from detaining you a few moments longer, by the doctrine that however much the most perfect of the species may have to glory of in the eye of his fellows, he has nothing to glory of before God. The apostle affirms this of Abraham, a patriarch whose virtues had canonized him in the hearts of all his descendants; and who from the heights of a very remote antiquity still stands forth to the people of this distant age as the most venerably attired in the worth and piety and all the primitive and sterling virtues of the older

dispensation. As to his piety, of this we have no document at all till after the time when God met him—till after that point in his history which Paul assigns as the period of his justification by faith—till after he walked in friendship with the God who found him out an alien of nature; and stretching forth to him the hand of acceptance, shed a grace and a glory over the whole of his subsequent pilgrimage in the world. “Now if thou didst receive it, wherefore shouldst thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” It is this question of the apostle which, among the varied graces and accomplishments of a Christian, perpetuates his humility as the garb and the accompaniment of them all. “Nevertheless not me but the grace of God that is in me,” is the great principle of explanation which applies to every virtue that springs and grows and expands into luxuriance and beauty on the character of man after his conversion, and so keeps him humble amid all the heights of progressive excellence to which he is conducted. Certain it is that it is not till after this period that he acquires the right principle or can make any right advances in the path of godliness; and that whatever he had antecedently—whether of affection to parents, or of patriotic regard to country, or of mild and winning affability to neighbourhood, or of upright duty in the walks either of public or relative life to society around him, or of all that which calls forth the voice of man to testify in behalf of the virtues that are useful and agreeable to man—certain it is, that with every human being, prior to that great transition in his history which, in the face of all the ridicule excited by the term, we denominate his conversion—God is not the Being whose moral and judicial authority is practically recognised in any of these virtues, and he has nothing to glory of before God.

It is thus we should like to convince the good man of this world of his wickedness, and to warn him that the plaudits of the world's admiration here may be followed up by shame and everlasting contempt hereafter. In this visible and earthly scene we are surrounded by human beings, all of whom are satisfied if they see in us of their own likeness; and should we attain the average character of society, the general and collective voice of society will suffer us to pass. Meanwhile, and till God be pleased to manifest Himself, we see not God; and not till the revelation of His likeness is made to us do we see our deficiency from that image of unspotted holiness—to be restored to which is the great purpose of the dispensation we sit under: And thus,

in spiritual blindness and spiritual insensibility, do the children of alienated nature spend their days—lifting an unabashed front and bearing a confident pretension in society, even as the patriarch Job challenged the accusation of his friends and protested innocence and kindness and dignity before them; but who, when God Himself met his awakened eye, and brought the overpowering lustre of His attributes to bear upon him, said of Him whom he had only before heard of by the hearing of the ear, that—now he saw Him with the seeing of the eye—he abhorred himself and repented in dust and in ashes.

This is the sore evil under which humanity labours. It is sunk in ungodliness, while blindness hinders the seeing of it. The magnitude of the guilt is unfelt; and therefore does man persist in a most treacherous complacency. The magnitude of the danger is unseen; and therefore does man persist in a security most ruinous. There may be some transient suspicion of a hurt, but a gentle alarm may be hushed by a gentle application; and therefore the hurt, in the language of the prophet, is healed but slightly. Peace when there is no peace forms the fatal lethargy of a world lying in wickedness—a peace which we should like to break up, by setting in prospect before you now the dread realities of a future world; but a peace which with the vast majority we fear is never broken up till these realities have encompassed them by their presence—even the sound of the last trumpet, and the appearance of celestial visitors in the sky, and all the elements in commotion, and an innumerable multitude of new-risen men whose eyes have just opened on a firmament which lowers preternaturally over a world that is going to expire. Oh! it is sad to think that pulpits should have no power of disturbance, and that the voice of those who fill them should die so impotently away from the ears of men who in a few little years will be sealed to this great catastrophe of our species—when tokens so portentous and preparations so solemn as these will mark that day of decision which closes the epoch of time and ushers in an irrevocable eternity!

The second lesson which we should like to urge upon you is, that this disease of nature—deadly and virulent as it is, and that beyond the suspicion of those who are touched by it—is not beyond the remedy provided in the gospel. Ungodliness is the radical and pervading ingredient of this disease; and it is here said of God that He justifies the ungodly. The discharge

is as ample as the debt; and the grant of pardon in every way as broad and as long as is the guilt which requires it. The deed of amnesty is equivalent to the offence; and foul in native and spiritual character as the transgression is, there is a commensurate righteousness which covers the whole deformity, and translates him whom it had made utterly loathsome in the sight of God, into a condition of full favour and acceptance before Him. Had justification been merely brought into contact with some social iniquity, this were not enough to relieve the conscience of him who feels in himself the workings of a direct and spiritual iniquity against God—who is burdened with a sense of his manifold idolatries against the love of Him who requires the heart as a willing and universal offering—and perceives of himself that the creature is all his sufficiency; and that—grant him peace and health and abundance in this world—he would be satisfied to quit with God for ever, and to live in some secure and smiling region of atheism. This is the crying sin with every enlightened conscience. It is the iniquity of the heart that survives every outer reformation, and lurks in its profound recesses under the guise and semblance of many outward plausibilities—it is this for which in the whole compass of nature no healing water can be found, either to wash away its guilt or to wash away its pollution. It is a sense of this which festers in the stricken heart of a sinner, and often keeps by him and agonizes him for many a day like an arrow sticking fast. And it is not enough that justification be brought into contact with the sin of all our social and all our relative violations. It must be made to reach the deadliest element in our controversy with God, and be brought into contact, as it is in our text, with the sin of ungodliness.

And to complete the freeness of the gospel. There are many who keep at a distance from its overtures of mercy, till they think they have felt enough and mourned enough over their need of them. Now, we have no such command over our sensibilities; and the most grievous part of our disease is, that we are not sufficiently touched with the impression of its soreness; and we ought not thus to wait the progress of our emotions, while God is standing before us with a deed of justification held out to the ungodliest of us all. To give us an interest in the saying, that God justifieth the ungodly, it is enough that we count it a faithful saying, and that we count it worthy of all acceptance.

It is very true that we shall not count it a faithful saying unless from some cause or other (and no cause more likely than a desire to escape from the consequences of sin) we have been induced to attend to it. And neither shall we count it worthy of all acceptance, unless our convictions have led us to feel the need of a righteousness and the value of an interest therein. But if your concern about your soul has been such that you have been led to listen—and that for your own personal behoof—to the offer of the gospel, that is warrant enough for us to explain to you the terms of it, and to crave your acceptance of them. Whatever your present alienation, whatever the present hardness of your heart under the sense of it, whatever there be within you to make out the charge of ungodliness, and whatever to aggravate that charge in your wretched apathy amid so much guilt and so much danger—here is God with a deed of righteousness, by the possession of which you will be accepted as righteous before Him; and which to obtain the possession of, you are not to work as for a reward, but to accept by a simple act of dependence. It becomes yours by believing; and while it is our office to deal out the doctrine of the gospel, we do it with the assurance that wherever the belief of its truth may light it will not light wrong; but that if the faith of this gospel be formed in the bosom of any individual who now hears us, it will be followed up by a fulfilment upon him of all its promises.

But thirdly, while the offer of a righteousness before God is thus brought down, so to speak, to the lowest depths of human wickedness, and it is an offer by the acceptance of which all the past is forgiven—it is also an offer by the acceptance of which all the future is reformed. When Christ confers sight upon a blind man he ceases to be in darkness; and when a rich individual confers wealth upon a poor one he ceases to be in poverty—and so, as surely, when justification is conferred upon the ungodly his ungodliness is done away. His godliness is not the ground upon which the gift was awarded any more than the sight of him who was blind is the ground upon which it was communicated, or than the wealth of him who was poor is the ground upon which it was bestowed. But just as sight and riches come out of the latter gifts, so godliness comes out of the gift of justification; and while works form in no way the consideration upon which the righteousness that availeth is conferred upon a sinner, yet no sooner is this righteousness granted than it will set him

a-working : so that while we hold it a high privilege that we can say to the ungodliest of you all—Here is the free and unconditional grant of a justification for you, the validity of which you have simply to rely upon—the privilege rises inconceivably higher in our estimation, that we can also say how the unfailing fruit of such a reliance will be a personal righteousness, emerging out of the faith which worketh by love, and which transforms into a new creature the man who truly entertains it.

LECTURE XIV.

ROMANS IV. 9-15.

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also ? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned ? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision ? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised : that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised ; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also : and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect : because the law worketh wrath : for where no law is, there is no transgression.”

IN the passage which stands immediately before, Paul had asserted of Abraham that it was his faith and not his obedience which was counted unto him for righteousness ; and that it was through the former medium, and not through the latter, that he attained the blessedness of those to whom God did not reckon the guilt of their offences. And from this particular instance does he proceed, in the verse before us, to a more general conclusion upon the subject.

Ver. 9, 10.—He resolves the question proposed in the ninth verse by adducing the case of Abraham. In what state was he when righteousness was imputed to him ? The historical fact is, that he found acceptance with God several years before the rite of circumcision was imposed upon him. The case of their own Abraham was the case of one who was justified in uncircumcision. An agreement between him and God had previously been made. A covenant had previously been entered upon. There was a promise by God ; and there was a faith by Abraham, which gave him a right to the fulfilment of it—and all this antecedent to his being circumcised. And when it was laid upon him as a binding observation, it was as the token or the memorial of what had passed between them. It was not the making of a new bargain : it was the sealing or the ratifying of an old one.

It was not another deed of conveyance, but an infestment upon the deed that had already been drawn out ; and though circumcision should at any time be abolished, and some other form, as that of baptism, be substituted in its place, this no more affected the great principle upon which man acquires a right of property to a place in heaven, than the great principles of justice upon which an earthly possession is transferred from one man to another would be affected by a mere change in the forms of an infestment. The promise of God who cannot lie makes it sure ; and yet a visible token may be of use in impressing its sureness, by serving the purpose of a more solemn declaration. It is just expressing the same thing symbolically which had before been expressed by words. By refusing the second expression you draw back from the first ; by joining in the second expression you only repeat and ratify the first. Thus circumcision is a sign—not a covenant itself, but in the language of Genesis, the token of a covenant. And thus also it is a seal, marking that more formal consent (to a thing however that had been before agreed upon) which lays one or both of the parties under a more sure or at least more solemn obligation.

Ver. 11.—The term ‘sign’ may be generally defined as a mark of indication—as when we speak of the signs of the times, or of the signs of the weather. A sign becomes a seal, when it is the mark of any deed or any declaration having actually come forth from him who professes to be the author of it. It authenticates it to be his—so that should it be a promise it binds him to performance ; or should it be an order it carries along with it all the force of his authority ; or should it be an engagement of any sort it fastens upon him the obligation of discharging it. It may sometimes happen that a seal marks the concurrence of two parties in the matter to which it is affixed—and the sign of circumcision was just such a seal. It was enjoined by God ; it was consented to by Abraham. God sealed by it the promise which He had formerly made of a righteousness to Abraham who believed ; and Abraham expressed by it that he was a believer. It did not change the footing upon which Abraham obtained the favour that was due to righteousness ; it only gave the form and the solemnity of a symbolical expression to that which was already in full reality and effect, though it had only yet been the subject of a verbal expression. The symbolical expression may afterwards be changed, or it may be dispensed with altogether ; and yet the original connexion between faith and the imputation

of righteousness subsists as it was at the beginning. Abraham is the primary model of this connexion, and remains so after the abolition of that temporary rite which marked the Jewish economy. And now that that economy is dissolved, he is still the father of all them who believe though they be not circumcised—that like as righteousness was imputed to him when uncircumcised, so may it be imputed unto them also.

Ver. 12.—It is not enough that they be of the circumcision that they may be the children of Abraham in the sense under which the apostle contemplates this relationship in the passage before us. It is faith which essentially constitutes this relationship. They who have the faith are his children, though they have not the circumcision. They who have the circumcision are not his children if they have not the faith. The sign without the thing signified will avail them nothing. It is true that circumcision is a seal set to by the will and authority of God, and guarantees a promise of righteousness on His part. But it is of righteousness unto faith; and when there is no faith there is no failure of any promise connected with this subject, though it should remain unfulfilled. The way to ascertain the reality of this faith is not by the simple act of a man submitting to have the seal of circumcision put upon him; it is by his walking in the steps of that faith which actuated the doings and the history of Abraham, and in virtue of which he obtained a meritorious acceptance with God—even prior to the rite of circumcision being laid upon him.

Ver. 13.—Not heir of the present evil world, but of a better country than this, that is, a heavenly—a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God—a new earth, as well as new heavens, wherein dwelleth righteousness: not to inherit this world, but to be counted worthy of obtaining that world upon which the righteous are made to enter after their resurrection from the dead. The promise of all this was not to those who obey, but to those who believe—not through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Ver. 14.—If it be of the law, then it must be of perfect obedience to that law. It cannot be through the medium of a broken but through the medium of an observed law; and not till its conditions are fulfilled can faith have any warrant to lay hold of the promises. This is just as good as nullifying faith altogether, and just as good as rendering the promise quite ineffectual, because in fact there has been no perfect obedience. There have been infractions of the law by all, and all therefore are the children of wrath.

Ver. 15.—To escape from this, there must be some other method of making out a righteousness unto eternal life than through the law; for admit the arbitrations of the law, and wrath will be wrought out of them. Condemnation will be the sure result of this process. It must and will pronounce the guilt of transgression upon all; and to get quit of this there must be some way or other of so disposing of the law as that it shall not be brought to bear in judgment upon a sinner. It has been so disposed of. It has been magnified and made honourable in the person of our illustrious Redeemer, and so borne away from the persons of those who through faith in Him are made—by the constitution of the economy of the gospel—partakers of His righteousness. The judgment of the law has been shifted away from them; and with this the charge of transgression has been lifted away from them.

The following is the paraphrase:—

‘Doth the blessing of an imputed righteousness come then upon the circumcision only, or may it also come upon those who are uncircumcised? We have said that it came upon Abraham, and that it was faith which was reckoned unto him for righteousness. Now in what circumstances was he at the time when it was so reckoned? Was he in circumcision, or uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And circumcision he received merely as a token or as a seal of the righteousness of that faith which he had when he was uncircumcised—that he might be the great exemplar of all those who after him should believe, though they were not circumcised—that to them also, even as unto him, there might be an imputation of righteousness—and that he might furthermore be the exemplar of those who were circumcised, and were at the same time, more than this, walking in the steps of that faith which their father Abraham had while uncircumcised. For the promise that he should obtain the inheritance was not to Abraham or his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they only are to inherit who fulfil the law, then faith is rendered powerless, and the promise can have no fulfilment; because the law worketh wrath and not favour, and it is only when it is taken out of the way that transgression is removed and righteousness can be imputed.’

The first lesson we shall endeavour to draw from this passage is, that it seems to contain in it the main strength of the scriptural argument for Infant Baptism. It looks a rational system,

to make sure of the thing signified ere you impress the sign—to make sure of the belief ere you administer the baptism—if this outward ordinance signify anything at all, to make sure that what is so signified be a reality. And all this has been applied with great appearance of force and plausibility to this question, and the principle educed out of it, that ere this great and initiatory rite of our faith be laid upon any individual he should make a credible profession of that faith. In confirmation of this, we are often bidden look to the order in which these two things succeeded one another in the first age of Christianity. We read of this one convert and that other having believed and been baptized; not of any having been baptized and then believing. And so this should be the order with every grown-up person who is not yet baptized. Should there be any such person, who from accidental circumstances has not had this rite administered to him in his own country, demand the profession of his faith, and be satisfied that it is a credible profession ere you baptize him. Let missionaries, these modern apostles, do the same in the pagan countries where they now labour—just as the first apostles did before them—just as was done with Abraham of old, who, agreeably to Paul's argument, first believed and afterwards underwent the rite of circumcision. But mark how it fared with the posterity of Abraham. He, the first Hebrew, believed and was circumcised; and it was laid down for a statute in Israel, that all his children should be circumcised in infancy. In like manner, the first Christians believed and were baptized; and though there be no statute laid down upon the subject, yet is there no violation of any contrary statute when all our children are baptized in infancy. At the origin of the two institutions, the order of succession is the same with both. The thing signified took precedence of the sign. Along the stream of descent which issued from the first of them, this order was reversed, and by an express authority too, so as that the sign took precedence of the thing signified. And so has it been the very general practice with the stream of descent that issued from the second of them; and if the want of express authority be pled against us, we reply that this is the very circumstance which inclines us to walk in the footsteps of the former dispensation. Express authority is needed to warrant a change; but it is not needed to warrant a continuation. It is this very want of express authority, we think, which stamps on the opposite system a character of presumptuous innovation. When once bidden to walk in a straight line, it

does not require the successive impulse of new biddings to make us persevere in it. But it would require a new bidding to justify our going off from the line into a track of deviation. The first Christians believed and were baptized. Abraham believed and was circumcised. He transmitted the practice of circumcision to infants. We transmit the practice of baptism to infants. There is no satisfactory historical evidence of our practice having ever crept in—the innovation of a later period in the history of the Church. Had the mode of infant baptism sprung up as a new piece of sectarianism, it would not have escaped the notice of the authorship of the times. But there is no credible written memorial of its ever having entered amongst us as a novelty; and we have therefore the strongest reason for believing that it has come down in one uncontrolled tide of example and observation from the days of the apostles. And if they have not in the shape of any decree or statutory enactment that can be found in the New Testament given us any authority for it, they at least, had it been wrong, and when they saw that whole families of discipleship were getting into this style of observation, would have interposed and lifted up the voice of their authority against it. But we read of no such interdict in our Scriptures; and in these circumstances we hold the inspired teachers of our faith to have given their testimony in favour of infant baptism, by giving us the testimony of their silence.

It is vain to allege that the Jewish was a grosser dispensation—not so impregnated with life and rationality and spiritual meaning as ours—with a ceremonial appended to it for the purpose mainly of building up a great outward distinction between the children of Israel and all the other families that were on the face of the earth; and that this was one great use of circumcision, which, whether affixed during the period of infancy or advanced life, served equally to signalize the people, and so to strengthen that wall of separation which in the wisdom of Providence had been raised for the sake of keeping the whole race apart from the general world, till the ushering in of a more comprehensive and liberal dispensation. “The flesh profiteth nothing,” says the Saviour; “the words I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life.” But it so happens that in the ordinance of circumcision there are the very spirit and the very life which lie in the ordinance of baptism. Viewed as a seal, it marks a promissory obligation on the part of God of the same privileges in both cases; and that is the righteousness of faith. Viewed as a sign,

it indicates the same graces. It indicates the existence of faith and all its accompanying influences on the character of him who has been subjected to it. That is not circumcision which is outward in the flesh, says Paul ; but circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter. That is not baptism, says Peter, which merely puts away the filth of the flesh ; but baptism is the answer of a good conscience unto God. If the baptism of infants offer any violence to the vital and essential principles of that ordinance—the principles of the ordinance of circumcision are altogether the same. Circumcision is the sign of an inward grace ; and upon Abraham, in the previous possession of this grace, the sign was impressed. And in the face of what might have been alleged—that it was wrong when the sign and the thing signified did not go together, this sign of circumcision was nevertheless perpetuated in the family of Abraham by being impressed on the infancy of all his descendants. In like manner, when an adult stands before us for baptism, should we be satisfied that he has had the washing of regeneration, then may we put the question—“ Can any man forbid water that he should not be baptized, who has received the Holy Ghost as well as we ? ” But should any man go farther, and forbid water to the infants of his present or his future family, he appears to do so on a principle which God Himself did not recognise ; and while he seems to exalt faith over forms—by waiting for the rise of this inward grace ere he will impose the outward ceremonial—he stamps a reflection on that very procedure that was instituted for him who is called ‘ the father of the faithful.’

But is it not wrong when the sign and the thing signified do not go together ? Yes, it is very wrong ; and let us shortly consider who they generally are that are in the wrong when such a disjunction at any time occurs. In the case of an adult the thing signified should precede the sign. When he offers himself for baptism, he asks to be invested with the sign that he is a disciple—and he makes a credible appearance and profession of his being so. Were it not a credible profession, then the administrator is in the fault for having put the outward stamp of Christianity on one whom he believed to be a counterfeit. Were it a profession rendered credible by the arts of hypocrisy, then the minister is free ; and the whole guilt that arises by an unworthy subject standing arrayed in the insignia of our faith lies upon him who wears them. But in the case of an infant the sign precedes the thing signified. The former has been impressed

upon him by the will of his parent ; and the latter remains to be worked within him by the care of his parent. If he do not put forth this care, he is in the fault. Better that there had been no sign if there was to be no substance ; and he by whose application it was that the sign was imprinted, and by whose neglect it is that the substance is not infused—is the author of this mockery upon ordinances. He it is who hath made the symbolical language of Christianity the vehicle of a falsehood. He is like the steward who is intrusted by his superior with the subscription of his name to a space of blank paper, on the understanding that it is to be filled up in a particular way agreeably to the will of his lord ; and who instead of doing so, has filled it up with matter of a different import altogether. The infant, with its mind unfilled and unfurnished, has been put by the God of providence into his hands ; and after the baptism which he himself hath craved, it has been again made over to him with the signature of Christian discipleship—and by his own consent—impressed upon it ; while he, by failing to grave the characters of discipleship upon it, hath unworthily betrayed the trust that was reposed in him ; and like the treacherous agent who hath prostituted his master's name to a purpose different from his master's will, he hath so perverted the sign of Heaven's appointment as to frustrate the end of Heaven's ordination. The worthies of the Old Testament, who in obedience to the God whom they served, circumcised their children in infancy, never forgot that they were the children of the circumcision ; and the mark of separation they had been enjoined to impose upon them reminded them of the duty under which they lay to rear them in all the virtues of a holy and separate generation ; and many a Hebrew parent was solemnized by this observance into the devotedness of Joshua, who said, that whatever others should do, he with all his house should fear the Lord ; and this was the testimony of the Searcher of hearts in behalf of one who had laid the great initiatory rite of Judaism upon his offspring—that He knew him that he would bring up his children after him in all the ways and statutes and ordinances that he had himself been taught ; and it was the commandment of God to His servants of old, that they should teach their children diligently, and talk to them as they rose up and sat down, and as they walked by the wayside, of the loyalty and gratitude that should be rendered to the God of Israel. Thus was the matter ordered under the old dispensation. The sign was impressed upon the

infant, and it served for a signal of duty and direction to the parent. It pointed out to him the moral destination of his child, and led him to guide it onward accordingly. There ought to be a correspondence between the sign and the thing signified. At the very outset of the child's life did the parent fix upon its person the one term of this correspondence, as a mark of his determination to fix upon its character the other term of it. It was as good as his promissory declaration to that effect; and if this be enough to rationalize the infant circumcision of the Jews, it is equally enough to rationalize the infant baptism of Christians. The parent of our day who feels as he ought, will feel himself in conscience to be solemnly charged that the infant whom he has held up to the baptism of Christianity he should bring up in the belief of Christianity; and if he fail to do this, it is he who has degraded this simple and impressive ceremonial into a thing of nought—it is he who has dissolved the alliance between the sign and the thing signified—it is he who brings a scandal upon ordinances, by stripping them of all their respect and all their significancy. Should the child live and die unchristian there will be a proper and essential guilt attached to him in consequence; but it will at least not be the guilt of having broken a vow which he was incapable of making. And yet the vow was made by some one. It was made by the parent; and in as far as the ruin of the child may be resolved into the negligence of him to whom he owes his birth, it is he who moved the baptism, and it is he who hath profaned it.

This ordinance lays a responsibility on parents—the sense of which has we doubt not given a mighty impulse to the cause of Christian education. It is well that there should be one sacrament in behalf of the grown-up disciple for the solemn avowal of his Christianity before men, and the very participation of which binds more closely about his conscience all the duties and all the consistencies of the gospel. But it is also well that there should be another sacrament, the place of which in his history is not at the period of his youth or manhood, but at the period of his infancy; and the obligation of which is felt, not by his conscience still in embryo, but by the conscience of him whose business is to develop and to guard and to nurture its yet unawakened sensibilities. This is like removing baptism upward to a higher vantage-ground. It is assigning for it a station of command and of custody at the very fountain-head of moral influence; and we repeat it to be well that Christianity should

have here fixed one of its sacraments—that it should have reared such a security around the birth of every immortal—that it should so have constituted baptism as to render it a guide and a guardian, whose post is by the cradle of the infant spirit ; and which, from coming into contact with the first elements of tuition, has we doubt not from this presiding eminence done much to sustain and perpetuate the faith of the gospel from generation to generation.

We have one observation more. Baptism, viewed as a seal, marks the promise of God to grant the righteousness of faith to him who is impressed by it ; but viewed as a sign, it marks the existence of this faith. But if it be not a true sign, it is not an obligatory seal. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved ; but he who is baptized and believes not shall be damned. It is not the circumcision which availeth, but a new creature. It is not the baptism which availeth, but the answer of a good conscience. God hath given a terrible demonstration of the utter worthlessness of a sign that is deceitful, and hath let us know that on that event as a seal it is dissolved. He thus stands emancipated from all His promises, and adds to His direct vengeance upon iniquity a vengeance for the hypocrisy of its lying ceremonial. When a whole circumcised nation lost the spirit though they retained the letter of the ordinance, He swept it away. The presence of the letter, we have no doubt, heightened the provocation ; and beware, ye parents who regularly hold up your children to the baptism of water and make their baptism by the Holy Ghost no part of your concern or of your prayers—lest you thereby swell the judgments of the land, and bring down the sore displeasure of God upon your families.

This affords, we think, something more than a dubious glimpse into the question that is often put by a distracted mother when her babe is taken away from her—when all the converse it ever had with the world amounted to the gaze upon it of a few months, or a few opening smiles which marked the dawn of felt enjoyment—and ere it had reached perhaps the lisp of infancy, it—all unconscious of death, had to wrestle through a period of sickness with his power, and at length to be overcome by him. Oh, it little knew what an interest it had created in that home where it was so passing a visitant—nor, when carried to its early grave, what a tide of emotion it would raise among the few acquaintances it left behind ! On it too baptism was impress as a seal, while as a sign it was never falsified. There was no positive

unbelief in its little bosom—no resistance yet put forth to the truth—no love at all for the darkness rather than the light—nor had it yet fallen into that great condemnation which will attach to all who perish because of unbelief, that their deeds are evil. It is interesting to know that God instituted circumcision for the infant children of Jews, and at least suffered baptism for the infant children of those who profess Christianity. Should the child die in infancy, the use of baptism as a sign has never been thwarted by it; and may we not be permitted to indulge a hope so pleasing, as that the use of baptism as a seal remains in all its entirety—that He who sanctioned the affixing of it to a babe will fulfil upon it the whole expression of this ordinance: And when we couple with this the known disposition of our great Forerunner—the love that He manifested to children on earth—how He suffered them to approach His person—and lavishing endearment and kindness upon them in the streets of Jerusalem, told His disciples that the presence and company of such as these in heaven formed one ingredient of the joy that was set before Him—tell us if Christianity do not throw a pleasing radiance around an infant's tomb? and should any parent who hears us feel softened by the touching remembrance of a light that twinkled a few short months under his roof, and at the end of its little period expired—we cannot think that we venture too far when we say that he has only to persevere in the faith and in the following of the gospel, and that very light will again shine upon him in heaven. The blossom which withered here upon its stalk has been transplanted there to a place of endurance, and it will then gladden that eye which now weeps out the agony of an affection that has been sorely wounded; and in the name of Him, who if on earth would have wept along with them, do we bid all believers present to sorrow not even as others which have no hope, but to take comfort in the thought of that country where there is no sorrow and no separation.

Oh, when a mother meets on high
The babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears—
The day of wo, the watchful night—
For all her sorrow, all her tears—
An over-payment of delight?

We have put forth these remarks not for the purpose of inspiring a very violent distaste towards the practice of others in respect of baptism, but of reconciling you to your own; and of

protecting you from any disturbance of mind on account of their arguments. It forms no peculiarity of the age in which we live, that men differ so much in matters connected with Christianity ; but it forms a very pleasing peculiarity, that men can do now what they seldom did before—they can agree to differ. With zeal for the essentials, they can now tolerate each other in the circumstantialities of their faith ; and under all the variety which they wear—whether of complexion or of outward observance—can recognise the brotherhood of a common doctrine and of a common spirit among very many of the modern denominations of Christendom. The line which measures off the ground of vital and evangelical religion from the general ungodliness of our world must never be effaced from observation ; and the latitudinarianism which would tread it under foot must be fearfully avoided ; and an impregnable sacredness must be thrown around that people who stand peculiarized by their devotedness and their faith from the great bulk of a species who are of the earth and earthly. There are landmarks between the children of light and the children of darkness which can never be moved away, and it were well that the habit of professing Christians were more formed on the principle of keeping up that limit of separation which obtains between the Church and the world—so that they who fear God should talk often together ; and when they do go forth by any voluntary movement of their own on those who fear Him not, they should do it in the spirit and with the compassionate purpose of missionaries. But while we hold it necessary to raise and to strengthen the wall by which the fold is surrounded—and that not for the purpose of intercepting the flow of kindness and of Christian philanthropy from within, but for the purpose of intercepting the streams of contamination from without—we should like to see all the lines of partition that have been drawn in the fold itself utterly swept away. This is fair ground for the march of latitudinarianism—and that not for the object of thereby putting down the signals of distinction between one party of Christians and another, but—allowing each to wear its own—for the object of associating them by all the ties and the recognitions of Christian fellowship. In this way we apprehend that there will come at length to be the voluntary surrender of many of our existing distinctions, which will far more readily give way by being tolerated than by being fought against. And this is just the feeling in which we regard the difference that obtains on the subject of baptism. It may

subside into one and the same style of observation, or it may not. It is one of those inner partitions which may at length be overthrown by mutual consent ; but in the meantime let the portals of a free admittance upon both sides be multiplied as fast as they may along the whole extent of it, and let it no longer be confounded with the outer wall of the great Christian temple, but be instantly recognised as the slender partition of one of its apartments, and the door of which is opened for the visits of welcome and kindly intercourse to all the other members of the Christian family. Let it never be forgotten of the Particular Baptists of England, that they form the denomination of Fuller and Carey and Ryland and Hall and Foster ; that they have originated among the greatest of all missionary enterprises ; that they have enriched the Christian literature of our country with authorship of the most exalted piety, as well as of the first talent and the first eloquence ; that they have waged a very noble and successful war with the hydra of Antinomianism ; that perhaps there is not a more intellectual community of ministers in our island, or who have put forth for their number a greater amount of mental power and mental activity in the defence and illustration of our common faith ; and—which is better than all the triumphs of genius or understanding—who, by their zeal and fidelity and pastoral labour among the congregations which they have reared, have done more to swell the lists of genuine discipleship in the walks of private society—and thus both to uphold and to extend the living Christianity of our nation.

LECTURE XV.

ROMANS IV. 16-22.

"Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace ; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed ; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were : who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb : he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief ; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."

VER. 16.—You may here remark, that faith is not a meritorious work in the business of our salvation. It does not stand in the place of obedience, as the term of a new bargain that has been substituted in room of an old one. It is very natural to conceive, that as under the old covenant we had salvation for our works—so under the new we have salvation for our faith ; and that therefore faith is that which wins and purchases the reward. And thus faith is invested in the imagination of some with the merit and character of a work, and Heaven's favour is still looked upon as a premium—not a premium for doing, it is true, but a premium for believing—and this, as we have already said, has just the effect of infusing the legal spirit into the letter and expression of our evangelical system, and thus not merely of nourishing the pride and the pretension of its confident votaries, but of prolonging the disquietude of all earnest and humble inquirers. For instead of looking broadly out on the gospel as an offer, they look as anxiously inward upon themselves for the personal qualification of faith as they ever did upon the personal qualification of obedience. This transfers their attention from that which is sure, even the promises of God—to that which is unsure, even their own fickle and fugitive emotions. Instead of thinking upon Christ they are perpetually thinking upon themselves—as if they could discover Him in the muddy recesses of their own heart, without previously admitting Him by the

avenue of a direct and open perception. They ought surely to cast their challenged and their invited regards on Him who is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever, when He calls them by His word to look upon Him from all the ends of the earth and be saved. But no! they cast their eyes with downward obstinacy upon their own minds; and there toil for the production of faith in the spirit of bondage; and perhaps, after they are satisfied with its fancied possession, rejoice over it as they would over any other meritorious acquirement in the spirit of legality. This is not the way in which the children of Israel looked out upon the serpent that was lifted up in the wilderness. They did not pore upon their wounds to mark the progress of healing there; nor did they reflect upon the power and perfection of their seeing faculties; nor did they even suffer any doubt that still lingered in their imaginations to restrain them from the simple act of lifting up their eyes: And when they were cured in consequence, they would never think of this as a reward for their looking, but regard it as the fruit of Heaven's gracious appointment. Do in like manner. It will make both against your humility and your peace, that you regard faith in the light of a meritorious qualification; or that you attempt to draw a comfort from the consciousness of faith, which you ought primarily and directly to draw from the contemplation of the Saviour. If salvation be given as a reward for faith, then it is not of grace. But we are told in this verse that it is of faith, expressly that it might be by grace. And therefore be assured that there is an error in all those conceptions of faith which tend to vitiate or to destroy this character, which make the good things of the gospel come down upon you as a payment and not as a present, which make the preaching of eternal life through Christ anything else than simply the offer of a gift, and faith anything else than simply the discerning of this offer to be true, and receiving it accordingly. In the one way, you can only be as sure of the promise as you are sure of yourself; and what a frail and fluctuating dependence is this, we would ask? In the other way, you are sure of the promise as you are sure of God, —and thus your confidence has a rock to repose upon; and the more firmly you adhere and are riveted to this foundation the less chance is there of your ever being moved away from the hope of the gospel; and though this be established not on what is within but on what is without you, let us not imagine that all the securities for personal worth and personal excellence are

thereby overthrown—for it is in the very attitude of leaning upon God, that man is upheld not only in hope but in holiness. It is in the very position of standing erect upon the foundation of the promises, that the promised strength as well as the promised righteousness is fulfilled to him. It is in the very act of looking unto Jesus that the light of all that grace and truth and moral lustre which shine upon him from the countenance of the Saviour is let in upon the soul, and is thence reflected back again in the likeness of this worth and virtue from his own person. We have no fear whatever of a simple dependence on the grace of the gospel operating as an impediment to the growth of the holiness of the gospel. We believe that it is the alone stay of our deliverance from the power of sin, just as it is the alone stay of our deliverance from the fears of guilt: And meanwhile, go not to obscure the aspect of this free and generous ministration by regarding the gospel in any other light than as an honestly announced present of mercy to all who will; or by regarding the faith of the gospel in any other light than you would the ear that heard the communication of the present, or than you would the hand that laid hold of it.

But to return from this digression. Ver. 16, 17.—The inheritance is of faith, that it might be by grace, which can be extended to many nations; and not of the law, which would confine it to one nation. This makes it sure to the whole seed of Abraham, not merely to his seed by natural descent, but to that seed which stands related to him from being believers. It is in this sense that it is written of him—he is the father of many nations. It was his faith which introduced him into a filial relationship with God; and in the eyes of God, on whom he believed, all who believed after him were regarded as his children. It was very unlikely that Abraham should in any sense be blest with an offspring. But God calleth out from nonentity such things as be not—and He also sees such an analogy between natural and spiritual things, that he gives to a spiritual relationship the name of a natural relationship. He did both in the case of Abraham. In the face of a very strong unlikelihood He conferred a real posterity on Abraham. And He constituted him in a mystical sense the father of a still more extended posterity, by making him the father of all who believed.

Ver. 18.—Abraham, perhaps, had no suspicion, at the utterance of this promise, of any deep or spiritual meaning that lay under it. He certainly apprehended it in its natural sense, and

perhaps in this sense alone. Looking forward to it with the eye of experience, he could have no hope; but looking forward to it with the eye of faith in the divine testimony, he might have a confident expectation. It is this which is meant by 'against hope believing in hope.' The stronger the improbability in nature, the stronger was the faith which overcame the impression of it. He suffered not himself to be staggered out of his reliance on that which was spoken. He thus rendered an homage to the truth of God, and an homage proportional to the unlikelihood of the thing which God testified. It was also an homage to His power as well as to His truth. It proved that he thought Him able to arrest and to turn nature; and if He promised to do so, that what He promised He was able also to perform. And this faith was counted to him for righteousness. God was pleased with the confidence that was placed in Him, and His pleasure in it was enhanced by the trials and difficulties which it had to contend with. It is thus that God's honour and man's interest are at one. We honour Him by believing. By believing we are saved. The fuller and firmer our persuasion in His truth the greater is the homage that we render Him, and the more abundant are both the present peace and the future glory which we bring down upon ourselves. To hope against hope—to believe in the midst of violent improbabilities—to realize the future things which are addressed to faith, and are so unlike those present things with which nature surrounds us—to maintain an unshaken confidence because God hath spoken, though the besetting urgencies of sense and experience all tend to thwart and to dislodge it: these are the trials which, if faith overcome, make that faith more precious than gold in the sight of our heavenly witness; and it will be found to praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

The following is the paraphrase of this passage:—

'Therefore the promised inheritance is of faith, that it might be by grace, which can be extended to all—so as to insure the promise to the whole generation of believers, not only to those who are of the law, but to those who have the faith of Abraham, the father and the forerunner of us all. Agreeably to the Scripture, "I have made thee a father of many nations," which he is in the eye and estimation of Him on whom he believed—even God, who by quickening that which is dead and dormant both called forth a real posterity to Abraham and also constituted

him the spiritual father of a posterity far more extended than that of which he was the natural progenitor. This looked most unlikely to the eye of nature and experience; but in the face of all the improbabilities which would have darkened the hope of other men did he with confidence hope that he should become the father of many nations—according to the word that was spoken to him about what his posterity should be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was yet about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at God's promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, thereby giving glory to God's faithfulness; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. And therefore was it reckoned unto him for righteousness.'

The lessons we shall try to enforce from this passage are all founded on the consideration that Abraham, in respect of his faith, was set up as a model to us—that in like manner as he believed in the midst of difficulties and trials, so ought we—that we ought to hold fast our confidence in the midst of apparent impossibilities, even as he did—that with us the eye of faith should look above and beyond all that is seen by the eye of flesh, even as with him—and that we should not only set out on the life of faith after his example, but should also walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham.

The first thing that strikes us in our great pattern is his tenacious and resolute adherence to the truth of God's testimony. "Let God be true," says the apostle, "and every man a liar."—If God have spoken, said the patriarch by his conduct, let us abide by it—though all nature and all experience should depone to the contrary. Amid all the staggering appearances by which he was surrounded, he kept by his firm persuasion in God's truth; and it was this which inwardly upheld him. His heart was fixed, trusting in God. He knew that it was His voice which first called him forth, and he was fully assured of its faithfulness; and that it was His promise which first allured him from the abode of his fathers, and he held it to be certain that what God had promised He was able to perform; and when all that was visible to sense looked unlikelihood upon his expectations, they were kept in full buoyancy and vigour by his unfaltering reliance on the word of Him who is invisible. All the agitations of his varied history could not unfasten his soul from the anchor of its fixed and unalterable dependence. And it was truly noble in

him, who obedient to the heavenly vision had torn himself away from the endearments of the place of his nativity, and at the call of what he deemed a voice of rightful authority went forth he knew not whither, and exchanged the abode of domestic serenity and bliss for the mazes of a toilsome and uncertain pilgrimage—and amid all that was fitted to dismay his heart when travelling in countries that were before unknown, made the will of God the ruling impulse of his history, and the promise of God the presiding star which cheered and conducted him on his way—it was a truly noble triumph of faith in this great patriarch, who, when a stranger in a strange land, looked around him and beheld nothing in the verge of this lower world that did not lower upon his destinies—yet could rejoice both in the safety that encompassed him, and in the glory that was before him—upheld singly but surely by this one consideration, that God hath said it, and shall He not do it?

It was against hope believing in hope for him to sustain with so much confidence the expectation that to him a son should be born. But the most striking display of his thus hoping against hope was when told that unto his son and his seed after him God should establish an everlasting covenant, and at the same time bidden to offer him up in sacrifice, he proceeded to do what God ordered, and yet retained in his heart the belief of what God said—when he lifted against him the meditated blow of death, knowing that even from death God could revive him—when he simply betook himself to his prescribed task, and kept by a purpose of obedience, whereby he not only overcame all the relentings of nature but threw a darkening shroud over prophecies that stood linked with the life of Isaac in the world. He knew that God would find a way of His own to their accomplishment; and it was this which bore him onward to the full proof and vindication of his faith: and should we be at a loss to comprehend what is meant by against hope believing in hope, we see in this trial that was laid upon Abraham, and in the acquittal he made of himself, the most plain and picturesque exhibition of it.

Now to be strong in faith as he was, to cherish the full persuasion that he did, to believe with him in the midst of obstacles, to make the glory of God's truth carry it over the appearances of nature so as to stagger not in the face of them, but to hope against hope—this is still the exercise of every Christian mind, and it were well to be guided therein by the example of

this venerable patriarch. Such is the way in which the message of the gospel is constructed—such are the terms of that embassy with which its ministers are charged, that the promise of God as a shield, and of God as an exceeding great reward, is as good as laid down at the door of every individual who hears it. It is true that the promise thus laid down will not be fulfilled upon him unless he take it up; or in other words, unless he believe it. Now there is a difficulty in the way of nature believing any such thing. There is a struggle that it must make with its own fears and its own suspicions ere it can admit the credibility of a holy God thus taking sinners into acceptance. There is an unlikelihood here which is ever obtruding itself on the apprehensions of the guilty, and which tends to keep the offered peace and pardon and reconciliation of the gospel at an exceedingly hopeless distance away from them. Can it indeed be true that God is at this moment beseeching me to enter into agreement with Him? Can it indeed be true that a way of approach has been devised open for admittance to myself, and on which if I am found, I am met by the lovingkindness and tender mercies of Him who looks so fearful to my imagination? Can it be true of that lofty and tremendous Being who sits on a throne of majesty, and with whom I have been wont to associate the characters of jealousy and wrath, and a sacredness so remote and inflexible that none may draw nigh unto it—can it be true that He is now bending compassionately over me and entreating my return from those paths of alienation in which I have all along wandered? We indeed read of an adjusted ceremonial by which sinners may be brought within the limits of His august sanctuary, and we read of a Mediator who hath made the rough places plain, and levelled the otherwise impassable mountains of iniquity which stood between us and God: But can it indeed be true that Christ is wooing and welcoming our approach towards Him, and that if we only come with reliance to Him as to the mercy-seat, then to us there will be no condemnation? Nature may strongly desire such a consummation, but nature strongly doubts its possibility; and it takes a struggle to surmount her apprehensions, and it is against hope if she believe in hope, and there is a contest here to be gone through ere our fears of that inflexible truth, which has proclaimed in the hearing of our conscience the curses of a violated law, shall be overcome by our faith in that truth which proclaims in Scripture the blessings of a free and offered gospel. And here then let the example of Abraham be proposed to cheer

our way over this barrier of unbelief. Let us stoutly imitate him in the resolute combat he held with the misgivings of nature. Let even the very chief of sinners face the unlikelihood that such as he can be taken into friendship with the God before whom his profaneness and profligacy have hitherto risen as a smoke of abomination. Let even him buoy up his expectations against the whole weight and burden of this despondency. Improbable as it may look to the eye of nature that an outcast so polluted and so loathsome can be admitted into the honours of righteousness, and that though onward to the present point of his history he be crimsoned over with the guilt of ungodliness, he can not only be forgiven but be justified—yet let him against this hope believe in hope, and the stronger his faith the more abundant to him will be the imputation of righteousness. In that very proportion in which he has heretofore trampled on the glory of God by his disobedience, will he render a glory to His truth by now believing in Him who justifieth the ungodly. Let him consider the faith of Abraham, and let the expressions which the apostle employs to characterize it now crowd upon his observation, and carry all doubt and timidity before them. It is just by standing on the truth of the gospel, and then bearing up under the sense of the guilt that hangs over us—it is just by firmly and determinedly persisting in this attitude of confidence on the word of God, even in the midst of all which without that word should sink us into despair—it is just by so doing, that like Abraham we stagger not because of unbelief; that like him we against hope believe in hope; that like him we are not weak in the faith but by being strong in it give glory to God; that like him we are fully persuaded that what God hath promised He is able to perform; and like him be assured—the guiltiest of you all—that if such be your faith, held firm and fast even unto the end—like as unto him so will this faith be imputed unto you for righteousness.

There is another great unlikelihood in the matter of Christianity to call forth the exercise of against hope believing in hope—not merely that God's disposition towards us should be so changed as that He shall regard us with an eye of acceptance, but that our disposition toward God shall be so changed as to make us happy in the fellowship of a common character and of a congenial intercourse with Him. This we are not by nature. Our delighted converse is with the things that are made, and not with the Maker of them. In reference to Him there is the

insensibility of spiritual death ; and the great transition that we have to undergo ere Heaven can to us be a place of kindred enjoyment, is—to be made alive again. For this purpose there must be a revival which no putting forth of any constitutional energy in man can at all accomplish—a process of quickening which nature cannot originate, and nature cannot carry forward—a resurrection of the soul that is as far beyond the bidding of any human voice as is the egress of a reanimated body from the grave. The man who knows how steeped are all his feelings and all his faculties in ungodliness, knows the moral and spiritual birth that we are now adverting to to be against the current of all his former experience, and beyond the achievement of all his present most strenuous exertions. And if against hope he believe in the hope that such a regeneration shall be begun or perfected in him, it will be on the footing of some such promise as sustained the expectations of the patriarch. This unfolds to us the link which connects our faith with our sanctification. God hath promised the clean heart and the right spirit to all who are in Christ Jesus ; and according to the firmness of our reliance upon this promise will be the fulness of its accomplishment upon our persons. Believest thou that I am able to do this ? says the Saviour to the man who looked to Him for a miraculous cure ; and according to his faith so was it done unto him. The apostle Paul looked upon another man under disease, and perceived that he had faith to be healed. Peter affirmed of the cripple whom he restored to the use of his limbs in the temple, that the name of Christ through faith in His name had made this man strong—yea, the faith which is by Him had given him this perfect soundness in the presence of them all. And thus do we recover our spiritual health. And thus are the blindness and the paralysis and the impotency that have so benumbed our moral faculties done away. The full and firm persuasion of the patriarch, that what is impossible with man is possible with God, will bring down this possibility in living demonstration upon our own characters. He who promises also says, that for this He must be inquired after ; and the prayer of faith brings down the fulfilment ; and the man who asks for what is so consonant to the will of God, as that he shall be made alive unto Himself, has only like Abraham to believe Him able to call from the womb of nonentity that power into being by which he is made a new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord. A creature—from the depths of his conscious depravity—thus knocking at the door which he cannot open, but who be-

believes that one is standing there to hear and to answer him—a humble aspirant after the character of heaven, who prays in faith for the love to God which he has never yet felt, and for the charity to man with which he has vainly tried to animate his own cold and selfish bosom—the labouring disciple of revelation, whose ear has taken up the promise of our eternal inheritance, but who knows that it is only through the medium of a birth in his own heart as preternatural as that of Isaac that he ever can arrive at it—Let him imitate the father of the faithful in his confident reliance on the promise of God ; and like him let him believe in the power that quickeneth from above ; and like him who was not weak in faith let him consider not the deadness of his own moral and spiritual energies, but give to God the whole glory of the renovation he aspires after—and he will most assuredly experience with all Christians, that when weak then is he strong, and that what God hath promised He is able also to perform.

But the habit of against hope believing in hope is not restricted to the great and general promises of Christianity. It extends to all the promises of the book of Revelation—to those for example in which God has condescended even on the passing affairs of our pilgrimage in this world, and affirmed that He will not leave us destitute of such things as are needful for the body, and hath admonished us to cast this care upon Him in the assurance of daily bread to us and our little ones. Amid the reelings of this eventful period¹ we doubt not that the aspect of the times has borne upon it a hard and a lowering expression towards many a family ; and that, standing on the eve of a fearful descent into the abyss of poverty, great has been the distress and great has been the disquietude ; and that while the present and the visible dependence was fast melting away, and every successive arrival had for months together called to the ear of the mercantile world a still more dismal futurity that was coming—many have been the hearts among you that were failing for fear, and to the eye of nature was it against all hope that you ever could be borne through the dark spaces of uncertainty that lay before you. And yet even here the Christian has ground against hope to believe in hope. The promise of daily bread is to him and to his children. Let him but have the faith of the patriarch, and he will not be afraid of evil tidings ; and while there be others who in the rush of a great commercial storm are melted in their soul because of

¹ In 1820—when commercial distress, and political discontent, threatened a violent out-breaking in the manufacturing districts of the West of Scotland.

trouble, and reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end—he believeth and is calm, and at length finds himself in the desired haven. And we appeal to this worst of seasons, we appeal to a period from the crash and the turbulence and the fearful despondency of which we are yet scarcely emerging—when society has been heaving under the burden of a commerce greater than it can bear, and the surfeited and overladen world has been rolling back upon its authors the produce of their own frenzied speculations—when the proudest of our great trading establishments have toppled to an overthrow, and strewed the face of an ocean that is still labouring with the ruins and the fragments of shipwrecked ambition—We are confident that even in the very midst of such a history as this, there is not a house we can enter nor a family from which we can obtain the record of all their vicissitudes and all their vexations where we shall not find a trophy of the faithfulness of God—where, up to the extent of His own engagement, which are what things we absolutely stand in need of—and why care we for the rest?—He has not ministered subsistence and safety to all who put their trust in Him. So that here is an ever recurring topic for the exercise of faith, and in behalf of God do we affirm—even in the unlikeliest and most threatening of all periods—that as the faith so will be the fulfilment.

And upon this very theme of our present remarks does the offering up of Isaac admit of a most powerful and pertinent application. It was through him that Abraham saw afar off the glory that was promised; and yet him was he required by God to sacrifice with his own hands—and even against hope believing in hope—he proceeded to render an unfaltering compliance with the order; and while he made full proof of his obedience on the one hand, did God on the other make full proof of His faithfulness. There is a time when adversity brings a man so low as to strip him of more than his all, and when it places him before the tribunal of his assembled creditors, and when justice bids a faithful account and a full surrender of all that belongs to him, and when, nevertheless, by an act of dexterous and unseen appropriation, he may retain a something with which he links the future revival of his business, or the future subsistence of his family. Now this is his appointed sacrifice. This, in despite of all fond anticipation in behalf of his prospects, and of all relentings on behalf of his children, it is his duty to give up. His business is to discharge himself of every item of God's will and

to embark himself with full reliance on God's promises. This is the trial both of his integrity and of his faith, and on the altar of truth it is his part to deposit an entire offering, and to bring forward every secret and untold article to the light of an open manifestation. This we would call the triumph of faith over vision, and of trust in God over the apprehensions of nature; and the unseen witness, who all the while is most intently looking on, can, out of the infinity of resources which He has at command, again bring sufficiency to his door—can at least fill him with that peace of contentment which with godliness is great gain, and bless with the light of His approving countenance that humbler walk to which he has descended—can throw a sweetness and a shelter around him that perhaps he never felt in the loftier exposures of society, and irradiate his more modest and homely dwelling-place with a hope that beams beyond the grave and soars above all the changes of this fleeting and uncertain pilgrimage.

There is still another lesson that remains to be drawn and enforced from the example of Abraham besides the strength of his faith, and that is the practical movement which it imprest upon him. To be the children of him who is called the father of the faithful, it is not enough that we imitate him in the principle of his faith—we must also, according to the language of the apostle, walk in the footsteps of it. It is very true that it was the belief of Abraham which was counted to him for righteousness. He believed what the Lord had spoken, and had there not been another communication to him from Heaven than simply that he was to have a son through whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, we can conceive a firm persuasion of the truth of this announcement resting in the mind of the patriarch without stimulating him to one deed or to one movement in consequence. It might have found ingress there, and taken up a most inviolable lodgment in his heart, and he be reckoned with as righteous because of it, and yet he may have occupied the very station and lived the very life that he would have done though no such message had ever come to his door, and no such promise had ever been addressed to him. But instead of this we find that his faith in the heavenly visitation was instantly followed up by a change in the whole course and habit of his pilgrimage, and a painful abandonment of all that was naturally dear to his heart was the very first fruit of it, and he forthwith put himself under a control which maintained an authoritative guidance over the

whole of his future history, and in the full attitude of service and subordination, did he wait the bidding of that Master's voice, who prescribed to him the conduct of all his journeyings through the world, and often laid upon him the most arduous tasks of obedience: And nothing can be more completely passive and resigned than the posture of him who has been styled the father of all who do believe—in that when the commandment came forth upon him from God he never once imagined that there was anything else for him to act in the affair but just to render an instantaneous compliance therewith. We have heard belief and obedience contrasted the one with the other, and in such a way as if these two terms stood in practical opposition. In the case of Abraham we see them standing in sure and immediate succession, so that the one emanated from the other; and just in proportion to the strength of his faith, and to the glory which he rendered unto God for His faithfulness, and to the unshattering reliance that he had upon His assurances, and to the thoroughness of his persuasion that what God had promised He was able also to perform—just in that very proportion did he commit himself to the authority of God, and amid all the uncertainties incident to one who was going he knew not whither, did he take counsel and direction from Him who was his Master in heaven; and nothing can be more evident than that character of devotedness to the whole will of God which stood impressed on the subsequent doings of his life upon earth; and instead of a mere contemplative persuasion with which he looked forward to the country that was promised to him, did he shape his measures with all the preparation and activity of a man who had been set upon the enterprise of travelling towards it. So that faith, instead of lulling him out of his activity, was the very principle which both set it agoing and kept it agoing. It was the moving force which first tore him away from those scenes and from that society to which nature so adhesively cleaves; and after he had been loosed from all that was dear to him did the same force act upon him with that continued impulse which made him just as exemplary for his works of obedience as he was for the strength and determination of his faith. It is most true, as Paul says to the Romans, that by faith Abraham was justified, and not by *obedience*. But it is just as true what he says to the Hebrews, that it was by faith that Abraham *obeyed*—when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By

faith he sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And he walked as a stranger and pilgrim upon earth, and declared plainly that he had gone forth in quest of a country.

The truth is, that God did not confine His utterance with Abraham to a bare promise, on the truth of which it was his part to rely. The very first utterance that is recorded was a precept, on the authority of which it was his part to proceed: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will show thee." It is very true that ere he would obey there was something to believe. He had to believe that it was God who spake unto him. He must have believed in the land of which he had been told. He must have believed in the truth of the promise that came immediately on the back of the commandment. He must in fact have given an entire and unexcepted glory to the truth of God—and must therefore have had a faith reaching to the whole extent of God's testimony. Had God simply said, "I will make of thee a great nation," the belief of such an announcement did not essentially lead to any movement on the part of our patriarch. But when God said—"Get thee out of thy country, and I will make of thee a great nation"—the belief of the announcement, extended in this manner, would lead Abraham to perceive that the act of his leaving home was just as essential to the fulfilling of it as the act of his becoming a great nation was essential. And the joy he felt in the latter part of the communication would just be in proportion to the prompt obedience that he rendered to the former part of it. It was his faith in the first address of God to him that led him to the first step of his obedience, and it was his faith in God's future addresses—where precepts and promises are intermingled together—that led him on to future steps of obedience: And it is just by walking in the same path of obedience that he did, that we walk in the footsteps of the faith of our father Abraham. An article of belief may lie up in our minds without any change or any transition; and such a belief can have no footsteps. But when it is a belief that carries movement along with it—when it is a belief in one who both bids and blesses with His voice at the same time—when it is a belief that is conversant with such an utterance as the following—"Arise, walk through the land in the length and in the breadth

of it : for I will give it unto thee ;” or with such an utterance as the following—“ I am the Almighty God ; walk before me and be thou perfect, and I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly”—when it is belief in a God who so manages His intercourse with His creatures, as to cheer them by His promises, and guide them by His directions at the same instant—there is a dependence that will issue from such a faith, but there is an obedience also ; and the successive parts of that practical history which it originated at the first, and animates throughout, are the footsteps of the faith.

LECTURE XVI.

ROMANS IV. 23-25.

"Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him ; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead ; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

THESE things were written for our admonition on whom the latter ends of the world have come. The circumstance of Abraham's faith being proposed as an example to us should bring up our confidence to the same pitch of boldness and determination which are ascribed to his in the preceding verses. He against hope believed in hope ; that is, he trusted in the face of unlikelihood. So ought we, however unlikely it is to the eye of nature that sinners should be taken into friendship with that God whose holiness is at irreconcilable variance with sin. We just do as Abraham did before us when we rest and rely upon God's friendship to us in Christ Jesus, and that simply on the ground that we judge Him to be faithful who has promised. It ought to encourage our faith when we read of him who was the father of the faithful staggering not at the promise of God through unbelief, but being strong in faith, and thereby glorifying God by his persuasion that what He had promised He was able also to perform. When we read that it was this very resolute and unfaltering reliance on the part of Abraham which God counted to him for righteousness, and that the same faith upon our part will bring down upon us the benefit of a like imputation—this ought to overrule the fears of guilt. It should rebuke all our doubts and apprehensions away from us. It should rivet our souls on this sure foundation, that God hath said it, and shall He not perform it? It should clear away the lowering imagery of terror and distrust from the sinner's agitated bosom : And if the most characteristic peculiarity in the belief of Abraham was that it was belief in the midst of staggering and appalling improbabilities—should not this just stimulate to the same belief the spirit of him who—feeling that by nature he is in the hands of

a God in whose sacred breast there exists a jealousy of all that is evil—is apt to view with incredulity the approaches of the same God when He proffers reconciliation even to the worst and most worthless offenders, and protests in their hearing, that if they will only draw nigh in the name of Christ He will forgive all and forget all?

Ver. 25.—The circumstance that is singled out in this passage as the object of the faith of Christians is that of God having raised up Jesus from the dead. In other parts of the Bible the resurrection of the Saviour is stated to be the act of God the Father; and however much the import of this may have escaped the notice of an ordinary reader, it is pregnant with meaning of the weightiest importance. You know that when the prison door is opened to a criminal, and that by the very authority which lodged him there, it evinces that the debt of his transgression has been rendered, and that he now stands acquitted of all its penalties. It was not for His own but for our offences that Jesus was delivered unto the death, and that His body was consigned to the imprisonment of the grave. And when an angel descended from heaven and rolled back the great stone from the door of the sepulchre, this speaks to us that the justice of God is satisfied, that the ransom of our iniquities has been paid, that Christ has rendered a full discharge of all that debt for which He undertook as the great Surety between God and the sinners who believe in Him. And could we only humble you into the conviction that you need the benefit of such a redeeming process—could we only show you to yourselves as the helpless transgressors of a commandment that cannot be trampled on with impunity—could we thoroughly impress you with the principle that God is not to be mocked, and that the sanctions of that moral government which He wields over the universe He has thrown around Him are not to be treated as things of no significance—could we reveal to you your true situation as the subjects of a law that still pursues you with its exactions while it demands reparation for all the indignities it has gotten at your hands,—then would the topics which we are now attempting so feebly to illustrate, and which many regard as the jargon of a scholastic theology that is now exploded, rise in all the characters of reality and truth before the eye of your now enlightened conscience; and gladly would you devolve the burden of your guilt on the head of the accepted sacrifice, that you may be rescued from the condemnation of those offences for which He was delivered, that

you may be lightened of all that fearful endurance which He has borne.

‘And raised again for our justification.’ We are not fond of that repulsive air which has doubtless been thrown around Christianity by what some would call the barbarous terms and distinctions of schoolmen. But it will, we think, help to illustrate the truth of the matter before us, that we shortly advert to the theological phrases—of a negative and positive justification. The former consists of an acquittal from guilt. By the latter a title is conferred to the reward of righteousness. There are two ways in which God may deal with you—either as a criminal in the way of vengeance, or as a loyal and obedient subject in the way of reward. By your negative justification you simply attain to the midway position of God letting you alone. He does not lay upon you the hand of retribution for your evil deeds; but neither does He lay upon you the hand of retribution for any good deeds. You are kept out of hell, the place of penal suffering for the vicious; but you are not preferred to heaven, the place of awarded glory and happiness for the virtuous. Now the conception is, that the Saviour accomplished our negative justification by bearing upon His own person the chastisement of our sins—He was delivered for our offences unto the death; but that to achieve our positive justification, He did more than suffer—He obeyed. He accumulated as it were a stock of righteousness, out of which He lavishes reward on those whom He had before redeemed from punishment. It was because He finished a great work that God highly exalted Him; and from the place which He now occupies does He shed on His disciples a foretaste of heaven here, as the earnest and the preparation for their inheritance hereafter. He does something more than work out their deliverance from the place of torment, and thus bring them to the neutral and intermediate state of those who are merely forgiven; He pours upon them spiritual blessings, and by stamping upon them a celestial character does He usher them even now into celestial joy—so as that, with their affections set upon things above they may already be said to dwell in heavenly places with Christ Jesus our Lord: And thus while it was by His death that He delivered them from the guilt of their offences, it is by His rising again that He obtained for them the rewards of righteousness, the privileges of a completed justification.

And here we may remark, that by the simple bestowment of

holiness upon His people does He in fact infuse into their spirits the great and essential element of heaven's blessedness. It is a mistake to think that it is either the splendour or the music of paradise which makes it a place of rejoicing. It is because righteousness will flourish there that rapture will be felt there. It is because heaven is the abode of purity that it is also an abode of peace and pleasantness. It is because every heart thrills with benevolence that in every heart there is beatitude unspeakable. It is love to God that calls forth hallelujahs of ecstasy which ring eternally in heaven. In a word, it is not an animal but a spiritual festival which is preparing for us in the mansions above; and in these mansions below a foretaste is felt by those who—through patient continuance in well-doing—seek for glory and immortality and honour. The real disciples of the Saviour on earth can testify, that if they had holiness enough they would have happiness enough; and a still more affecting testimony to the truth—that the atmosphere of goodness is of itself an atmosphere of gladness and of light—may be seen in the mental wretchedness of those who mourn some deadly overthrow from that purity of heart which at one time guarded and adorned them—who have fallen from peace, and that simply because they have fallen from principle—and feel in their bosoms the agonies of hell, and that without another instrument of vengeance to pursue them than a sense of their own native and inherent worthlessness.

The following is the paraphrase of this short passage:—

‘Now it was not for the mere sake of Abraham that righteousness was reckoned to him because of his faith—but for us also to whom it shall be reckoned, if we believe on Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead—who was delivered up unto the death as an atonement for our offences; and was then raised that He might confer upon us the fruits of His own achievement, the rewards of His own obedience.’

We have little more than time to remark that the faith of Christians is as little an inert or merely speculative principle as the faith of Abraham—that it is followed up by a practical movement just as his was, and has its footsteps just as his had—that if the outset of his was marked by a violent separation from all the habits and attachments of nature, the outset of ours is marked by a separation from our old tastes and our old tendencies in every way as violent—that if in the progress of his he had to obey the requirement which laid upon him the sacri-

fice of his dearest possessions upon earth, in the progress of ours we may be called upon to cut off a right hand or to pluck out a right eye—that if he was bidden to wander afar from the scenes of his infancy, and to abandon all the endearments of his wonted society, so also we—without having to describe one mile of locomotion—are bidden to enter upon a new spiritual region, and by so doing to be deserted by the congeniality and approbation of all our ungodly friends and all our worldly companionships. In a word, the faith of Christianity, like the faith of the patriarch, is not a mere metaphysical notion—neither are the blessings of Christianity a reward for the soundness of it. The faith both of the one and of the other is just such a practical sense of the reality of unseen and eternal things as leads us to go in actual request of them according to a prescribed course; and in so doing to renounce present things, whatever be the force and whatever be the urgency of their allurements. The faith that was in the patriarch's heart originated such doings in the history of his life as declared plainly that he sought a country. And our faith is nothing, it is but the breath of an empty profession, but the utterance of a worthless orthodoxy, if it be not followed up by such measures and such movements as plainly declare that immortality is the goal to which we are tending—that the world is but the narrow foreground of that perspective which is lying at our feet—and with the eye stretching forward to the magnificent region beyond it, that we are actually keeping on the straight but single path which conducts to this distant heaven, though set at every footstep with thorns, and hemmed on the right hand and on the left with difficulties innumerable.

Go forth with this test upon actual society, and make a survey of that mighty throng that move upon our streets, and frequent in thousands our market-places—behold every individual in the busy and anxious pursuit of some object which lies in the distance away from him—meet him at any one hour of his history, and ascertain if possible whether the thing on which his heart is lavishing all its desirousness be placed on this or on the other side of death: and if in every instance the character of the occupation shall plainly declare that the region of sense which is near engrosses every feeling, and that the region of spirit which is distant is not in all his thoughts, then if faith—instead of a barren dogma—be indeed the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen—on this very day might not the question and complaint of our Saviour be preferred, “Verily,

when the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith upon the earth?"

It just occurs to us before we are done, that we may gather from the history of Abraham, and that by no very circuitous process of inference, the efficacy of affliction in promoting the conversion of a soul to God. For anything that appears, he, at the call of Heaven, left a happy home, and a smiling circle of relationship, and a prosperous establishment, and a neighbourhood that esteemed him. This added to the violence of the separation. But conceive, that previous to the call his family had been wrested from him by death, or that his wealth had gone by misfortune into dissipation, or that that most grievous of all misfortunes had befallen him—he had incurred disgrace by some violent departure from rectitude: then the ties which bound him to the place of his nativity had been broken, and instead of a painful banishment he would have felt it as a refuge and a hiding-place to have gone a solitary wanderer from the place of his nativity. And in like manner may affliction loosen even now the bonds that attach us to the world; and that love of it which is opposite to the love of the Father may receive a death-blow from some great and unlooked-for calamity; and the heart, bereaved of all its wonted objects, may now gladly close with the solicitations of that voice which speaketh from heaven and would woo us to the abiding glories of eternity; and we may now find it easier to give up our disengaged attachments unto God—seeing that it has pleased Him by the infliction of His chastening hand to sever away from them all those objects on which they wont so fondly to expatiate: and thus it is, that from the awful visitations of death or poverty, or any other dreadful overthrow from some eminence which at one time was occupied, there may at length—after a dark and brooding period of many agitations—emerge the light of new-born prospects, there may at length spring up the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

LECTURE XVII.

ROMANS V. 1, 2.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

To be justified is not here to be made righteous, but to be counted righteous. To be justified by faith, expresses to us the way in which an imputed righteousness is made ours. Faith is that act of the recipient by which he lays hold of this privilege. It contributes no more to the merit that is reckoned to us than the hand of the beggar adds any portion to the alms that are conferred upon him. When we look to the righteousness that is made ours by faith, it is well to go altogether out of ourselves, and not to mix up with it any one personal ingredient, whether of obeying or of believing. The imagination of a merit in faith brings us back to legal ground again, and exposes us to legal distrust and inquietude. In the exercise of faith the believer's eye looks out on a cheering and a comforting spectacle, and from the object of its external contemplation does it fetch homeward all the encouragement which it is fitted to convey. In a former verse of this epistle we are said to be justified by grace. It was in love to the world that the whole scheme of another righteousness was devised and executed, and offered to man as his plea both of acquittal and of reward before the God whom he had offended. In another place of the New Testament we read of being justified by Christ—even by Him who brought in that righteousness which is unto all and upon all who believe. One should look out to that which forms the ground and the matter of our justification ; and when we read here that we are justified by faith, one should understand that faith is simply the instrument by which we lay hold of this great privilege—not the light itself, but the window through which it passes—the channel of transmission upon our persons, by which there is attached to them the merit of the righteousness which another has wrought, and of the obedience which another has rendered.

‘We have peace with God.’ There are two senses in which this expression may be understood. It may signify that peace which is brought about by a transition in the mind of the God-head, and in virtue of which He is appeased towards us. He ceases from that wrath against the sinner which only abideth on those who believe not; and from an enemy He—in consideration of a righteousness which He lays to our account after we have accepted it by faith—becometh a friend. Or it may signify that state which is brought about by a transition in our minds, and in virtue of which we cease from our apprehension of God’s wrath against us—not, we think, a dissolving of our enmity against Him, but a subsiding of our terrors because of Him—rest from the agitations of conscious guilt, now washed away—rest from the forebodings of anticipated vengeance, now borne by Him on whom the chastisement of our peace was laid. This we conceive to be the true meaning of peace with God in the verse before us. The whole passage, for several verses, looks to be a narrative of the personal experience of believers—of their rejoicing, and of their hoping, and of their glorying. The subject of the peace that is spoken of in this verse is the mind of believers—a peace felt by them, no doubt, because they now judge that God is pacified towards them; but still a peace the proper residence of which is in their own bosoms, that now have ceased from their fears of the Lawgiver, and are at rest.

Peace, in this sense of it, then, being the effect of faith, affords a test for the reality of this latter principle. Some perhaps may think that this could be still more directly ascertained, if instead of looking at the test we looked immediately to the principle itself. By casting an immediate regard upon one’s own bosom we may learn whether peace is there or not. But by casting the same inward regard might not we directly learn whether faith is there or not? If it be as competent for the eye of consciousness to discern the faith that is in the mind as to discern there the peace that is but the effect of faith—might not we, without having recourse to marks or evidences at all, just lay as it were our immediate finding upon the principle that we want to ascertain, and come at once to the assurance that—faith is in me, because I am conscious it is in me?

Now let it be remarked that there are certain states and habits of the soul which are far more palpable than others to the eye of conscience—certain affections which give a far more powerful intimation of their presence, and can therefore be much

more easily and immediately recognised—certain feelings of so fresh and sensible a character that almost no power of self-examination is required to ascertain the existence of them. I could much more readily, for example, find an answer to the question—what are the emotions of my heart? if there be any depth or tenderness in them at all, than I could answer the question—what the notions of my understanding are, and whether they amount to a belief, or stop short at a mere imagination? A state or a process of the intellect is far more apt to elude the inward discernment of man than a state or a process of sensible impression, which announces its own reality to him in spite of himself. And thus it is that it may be a very difficult thing to find whether faith be in me by taking a direct look at the state of the understanding—while it may not be difficult to find whether peace be in me, or love be in me, or a principle of zealous obedience be in me—all of these making themselves known, as it were, by the touch of a distinct and vigorous sensation. And hence the test of the principle may be far more readily come at than the principle itself. The foliage and the blossoms may stand more obviously revealed to the eye of the inner man than the germ from which they originate; and what our Saviour says of His followers is true of the faith by which they are actuated—that by its fruits ye shall know it.

And as to the peace of our text, which is stated there to be a consequence of faith—it surely cannot be denied, but by those who never felt what the remorse and the restlessness and the other raging elements of a sinner's bosom are, that the consequence is far more obvious than the cause. The mind that has been tossed and tempest-driven by the pursuing sense of its own worthlessness, should ever these unhappy agitations sink into a calm, will surely feel the transition and instantly recognise it. When an outward storm has spent its fury, and the last breath of it has died away into silence, the ear cannot be more sensible of the difference, than is the inner man when the wild war of turbulence and disorder in his own heart is at length wrought off to its final termination. The man may grope for ever among the dark and brooding imagery of his own spirit, and never once be able to detect there that principle of faith, which may tell him that though he suffers now he will be safe in eternity. But should this unseen visitor actually enter within him, and work the effect that is here ascribed to it, and put an end to that sore vengeance of discipline with which God had exercised him,

and again restore the light of that countenance which either looked to him in wrath or was mantled in darkness—should he now feel at peace from those terrors that so recently had made him afraid; and the God that lowered judgment upon his soul now put on a face of benignity, and bid this unhappy outcast again look up to Him and rejoice—should the guilt which so agonized him be sprinkled over with the blood of atonement, and he again be translated into the sunshine of conscious acceptance with the Being whose chastening hand had well-nigh overwhelmed him—we repeat it, that though faith in itself may elude the exploring eye of him who finds the search that he is making through the recesses of his moral constitution to be not more fatiguing than it is fruitless—yet faith as the harbinger of peace may manifest at once its reality by an effect so powerful and so precious.

This may serve perhaps to illustrate the right attitude for a penitent in quest of comfort under the burden of convictions which distress or terrify him. He may at length fetch it from without—but he never will fetch it primarily or directly from within. The children of Israel might have as soon been healed by looking downwardly upon their wounds rather than upwardly to the brazen serpent, as the conscience-stricken sinner will find relief from any one object that can meet his eye in that abyss of darkness and distemper to which he has turned his own labouring bosom. He is where he ought to be when lying low in the depths of humiliation, but never will he attain to rest or to recovery till led to the psalmist's prayer—"Out of the depths do I cry unto thee, O Lord." It is not from the trouble that is below but from the truth that is above that he will catch the sunbeam which is to gladden and to revive him. It is not by looking to himself but by looking unto Jesus; and that peace with God which he never can arrive at through the medium of so dark a contemplation as his own character—that peace the tidings of which he never will read among the lineaments of his own turpitude and deformity—the peace to which no exercise of penitential feeling, though prolonged in sorrow and bitterness to the end of his days, will ever of itself conduct him—the peace with God, which through himself or through any penance of his own inflicting he never will secure, can only come in sure and abundant visitation upon his heart through the channel of our text—when it is peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Look unto me, all ye ends of the earth, and be saved."

“Like as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.” “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in the hearts of those who believe, to give them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; and they who believe not and are lost, are blinded by the god of this world, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”

Ver. 2.—The single word *also* may convince us that the privilege spoken of in the second verse is distinct from and additional to the privilege spoken of in the first. The grace wherein we stand is something more than peace with God; we understand it to signify God’s positive kindness or favour to us. You may have no wrath against a man to whom at the same time you have no feeling of positive good-will. You are at peace with him, though not in friendship with him. It is a great deal that God ceases to be offended with us, and is now to inflict upon us no penalty. But it is still more that God should become pleased with us, and is now to pour blessings upon our heads. It is a mighty deliverance to our own feelings when our apprehensions are quieted and we have nothing to fear. But it is a still higher condition to be preferred to, when our hopes are awakened and we rejoice in the sense of God’s regard to us now, and in the prospect of His glory hereafter. It is additional to our peace in believing that we also have joy in believing. There is something here that will remind you of what has been already said of negative and positive justification. It was in dying that Christ pacified the Lawgiver. It was in rising again that He obtained as the reward of His obedience the favour of God in behalf of all those for whom He now liveth to make intercession—and from these two verses, the distinction to which we have already adverted receives another illustration.

The following is a paraphrase of these two verses:—

‘Therefore having righteousness laid to our account because we have faith, we enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also it is that we have obtained admittance through our faith into that state of favour with God wherein we stand here, and rejoice in the hope of His glory hereafter.’

The only remaining topic that occurs to us from this short but comprehensive passage, is that glory of God which is hereafter to be revealed. The apostle Peter speaks of believers being be-

gotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that passeth not away, and is reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. We cannot speak in detail upon a subject that has yet to be revealed. We cannot lift away the veil from what another apostle tells us is still a mystery, when he says, that it doth not yet appear what we shall be. But we may at least carry our observation to the extent of the partial disclosure made to us by the same apostle, when he says, though "it doth not yet appear what we shall be, yet we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

From this we at least gather that we shall have a direct perception of God. You know how much it is otherwise now—how, though He is not far from any one of us, He is as hidden from all observation as if removed to the distance of infinity away from us—how, though locally He is in us and around us, yet to every purpose of direct and personal fellowship we are as exiles from His presence—how all that is created, though it bear upon it the impress of the Creator's hand, instead of serving to us as a reflection of the Deity serves as a screen to intercept our discernment of Him. It is not true that the visible structure of the universe leads man at least to trace the image and to realize the power and operation of that Divinity who reared it. It is not true that he is conducted upwards, from the agents and the secondary causes that are on every side of him to that unseen and primary Cause who framed at first the whole of this wondrous mechanism, and still continues to guide by His unerring wisdom all the movements of it. The world in fact is our all, and we do not penetrate beyond it to its animating Spirit; we do not pierce the canopy that is stretched above it, to the glories of His upper sanctuary. The mind may stir itself up to lay hold of God; but, like a thin and shadowy abstraction, He eludes the grasp of the mind—and the baffled overdone creature is left without an adequate feeling of that mysterious Being who made and who upholds him. To every unconverted man, creation, instead of illustrating the Deity, has thrown a shroud of obscurity over Him; and even by the eye of a believer is He seen in dimness and disguise, so that almost all he can do is to long after Him in the world; and as the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so does his soul thirst after the living God. The whole

creation groaneth and travaileth under the sentence of its banishment from Him who gave it birth ; and even they who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit do groan within themselves under the heavy incumbrance that weighs down their souls as they follow hard after the yet unseen Father of them. All they can reach in this nether pilgrimage is but a glimpse and a fore-taste of the coming revelation ; and as to that glory which while in the body they shall never behold with the eye of vision, they can now only rejoice in the hope of its full and abundant disclosure in the days that are to come.

It were presumptuous, perhaps, to attempt any conception of such a disclosure—when God shall show Himself personally to man—when the mighty barrier of interception that is now so opaque and impenetrable shall at length be moved away—when the great and primitive Father of all shall at length stand revealed to the eye of creatures rejoicing before Him—when all that design and beauty by which this universe is enriched shall beam in a direct flood of radiance from the original mind that evolved it into being—when the sight of infinite majesty shall be so tempered by the sight of infinite mercy that the awe which else would overpower will be sweetened by love into a most calm and solemn and confiding reverence—and the whole family of heaven shall find it to be enough of happiness for ever, that the graces of the Divinity are visibly expanded to their view, and they are admitted into the high delights of ecstatic and ineffable communion with the living God. But it will be the glory of His moral perfections that will minister the most of high rapture and reward to these children of immortality. It will be the holiness that recoils from every taint of impurity. It will be the cloudless lustre of justice unbroken, and truth unchanged and unchangeable. It will be the unspotted worth and virtue of the Godhead—yet all so blended with a compassion that is infinite, and all so directed by a wisdom that is unsearchable, that by a way of access as wondrous as is the Being who devised it sinners have entered within the threshold of this upper temple ; and without violation to the character of Him who presides there have been transported from the region of sin to this region of unsullied sacredness. And there, seeing Him as He is, do they become altogether like unto Him ; and there are they transformed into a character kindred to His own ; and there that assimilating process is perfected, by which every creature who is in Paradise has the image of glory that shines upon him from

the throne stamped upon his own person; and there each, according to the measure of his capacity, is filled with the worth and beneficence of the Godhead; and there the distinct reward held forth to the candidates for heaven upon earth is, that they shall see God, and become like unto God—like Him in His hatred of all iniquity, like Him in the love and in the possession of all righteousness.

You will be at no loss now to understand how it is that he who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as God is pure. It is by progress in holiness in fact that he is making ground on that alone way which leads and qualifies for heaven. There is no other heaven truly than a heaven of holiness; and by every wilful sin that is committed does man increase his distance from the promised reward, and put himself more hopelessly away from it. You will see by this that faith in the gospel and a deliberate following after sin is a contradiction in terms. The very road to heaven is a road of conformity to the will, and of unceasing approximation to the resemblance, of the Godhead. The great object of the dispensation we sit under is to be restored to His forfeited image, and to be reinstated in all the graces of the character that we have lost. The atonement by Christ is nothing—justification by faith is nothing—the assumption of an orthodox phraseology is nothing—unless they have formed a gate of introduction to that arena on which the Christian must fight his way to a heavenly character, and so be created anew in righteousness and true holiness. Every sin throws him aback on the ground that he is travelling; and often throws him aback so fearfully, that if he feels as he ought he will tremble lest he has been thrown off from the ground altogether—lest the sore retrogression that he has made from all holiness has made him an outcast from all hope—lest by putting a good conscience away from him he has made shipwreck of faith: And never will the irreconcilable variance between salvation and sin come home to his experience in more sure and practical demonstration than when sin has thrown him adrift from all the securities which held him; and through a lengthened season of abandonment and distress he can find no comfort in the Word, and catch no smile from the upper sanctuary, and hear no whisper of mercy from God's returning Spirit, and feel no happiness and no hope in the Saviour.

The same doctrine receives a more pleasing illustration from the bright side of the picture. To ascertain the kind of happi-

ness that is in heaven the best way is to observe the happiness of a good man upon earth. You will find it to consist essentially in those pleasures of the heart which the love and the service of God bring along with it—in a sense of the divine favour beaming upon him from above; and in the fresh and perpetual feast of an approving conscience within—in the possession of a sound and a well-poised mind, prepared for the attack of every temptation, and with all its ready powers at command, on the intimation of every coming danger—in the triumph of those noble and new-born energies by which he can clear the ascending way of a progressive holiness, through all those besetting urgencies that are found to entangle and to discomfit other men—and, above all, in those hours of sweet and solemn rapture by which he diversifies a walk unspotted in the world with the lofty devotion of his occasional retirements away from it. Who shall say that righteousness is not the road to a believer's heaven, when it is righteousness, and that alone, which gives its breath and its being to all the ecstasy that abounds in it? Or who shall say that the grace in which he is taught to rejoice encourages to sin, when it is sin that wrests every foretaste of the coming blessedness from his soul; and darkens, if not to utter and irrecoverable extinction, at least for a period of deep and dreadful endurance, all his prospects of enjoying it?

We shall conclude with offering you an actual specimen of heaven upon earth, as enjoyed for a season in devotional contemplation on the word of God; and it may afford you some conception of the kind of happiness that is current there. "And now," says the good Bishop Horne, after he had finished his commentary on the Psalms, and had held many a precious hour of converse with God and with the things that are above when meditating thereon—"And now, could the author flatter himself that any one would take half the pleasure in reading the following exposition which he hath taken in writing it, he would not fear the loss of his labour. The employment detached him from the bustle and hurry of life, the din of politics and the noise of folly; vanity and vexation flew away for a season, care and disquietude came not near his dwelling. He arose fresh as the morning to his task; the silence of the night invited him to pursue it; and he can truly say that food and rest were not preferred before it. Every psalm improved infinitely upon his acquaintance with it, and no one gave him uneasiness but the last; for then he grieved that his work was done. Happier

hours than those which have been spent in these meditations on the songs of Zion he never expects to see in this world. Very pleasantly did they pass, and moved smoothly and swiftly along; for when thus engaged he counted no time. They are gone, but have left a relish and a fragrance upon the mind, and the remembrance of them is sweet."

May every Sabbath you shall spend upon earth bring down such a glimpse of heaven's glory and heaven's blessedness upon your habitations. No care; no poverty; no desolation, by the hand of death upon your household; no evil—saving remorse—that the world can oppose, need to keep such precious visitations away from you. But oh remember that it is only to those who keep the sayings of the Saviour that He has promised thus to manifest Himself; and it is only after a pure and watchful and conscientious week that you can ever expect its closing Sabbath to be a season of rejoicing piety, a day of peace and of pleasantness.

LECTURE XVIII.

ROMANS V. 3-5.

“And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.”

THE apostle had before said that we rejoice in hope of the glory of God; and he now says that we glory in tribulation also. This impresses the idea of the great opposition that obtains between an appetite for spiritual and an appetite for temporal blessings. To rejoice in hope of the one is a habit of the same bosom that rejoices and glories in the loss or destruction of the other—not however that the ruin of any present good is desirable on its own account, for all such affliction is not joyous but rather grievous; but still upon the whole should it be matter of gladness if the short affliction, that is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and if afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who are exercised thereby.

‘Tribulation worketh patience.’ You will observe that the word translated ‘patience’ is of a more active quality in the original than it is according to our customary acceptation of it. We understand it to be a mere virtue of sufferance, the passive property of enduring without complaint and without restlessness. But it really extends to something more than this. The same word has been translated ‘patient continuance,’ in that verse where the apostle speaks of a patient continuance in well-doing. The word ‘perseverance’ is in fact a much nearer and more faithful rendering of the original than the word patience. “Let us run with patience the race set before us,” says the apostle, in our present translation. Let us run with perseverance the race set before us, were an improvement upon the sense of this passage. We wait with patience, or sit still with patience, or simply suffer with patience; but surely we run not with patience but with perseverance. It is well when tribulation is met with uncomplaining acquiescence, or met with patience—but it is still better when it not only composes to resignation, but stimu-

lates to a right and religious course of activity. "It is good for me to have been afflicted," says the psalmist, "that I might learn thy law." "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." It is very well when affliction is submitted to without a murmur—but better still when it quickens the believer's pace in the divine life, and causes him to emerge on a purer and loftier career of sanctification than before.

We conceive the main explanation of an afflicting process upon the heart to lie in this, that the heart must have an object on which to fasten its hopes or its regards; that if this object be reft from it, a painful void is created in the bosom, the painfulness of which is not done away till the void be replaced; that the soreness of such a visitation therefore, as the loss of a child, inflicted upon a worldly man, will at length find its relief and its medicine in worldly objects; and that in the succession of company, or in the intense prosecution of business, or in the variety of travelling, or in the relapse of his feelings again to the tone of his ordinary pursuits and ordinary habits, time will at length fill up the vacancy and cause him to forget the anguish of his present tribulation. But if instead of worldly he be spiritual, he will seek for comfort from another quarter of contemplation—he will try to fill up the desolate place in his heart with other objects—he will turn him to God, and labour after a fuller impression of that enduring light and love and beneficence, which if they only shone upon him in clearer manifestation would effectually chase away the darkness of his incumbent melancholy. In such circumstances, and with such feelings, prayer will be his refuge; communion with God will be the frequent endeavour of his soul; he will try to people the vacancy created in his bosom by the loss of earthly things with the imagery of heaven; he will heave up as it were his affections now disengaged from that which wont to delight and to occupy them, but which is now torn away; he will in the stirrings of his agitated spirit, attempt to lift them to that serene and holy and beautiful sanctuary where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. And who does not see that he has now more of heart to give to these things, delivered as he is from the engrossment of a fond and favourite affection; and that, as the fruit of these repeated attempts to follow hard after God, he may at length obtain a nearer approximation; and that on the singleness of his intent and undivided desires a light may be made to shine, which will disclose to him with far more clear and affecting impression, those great realities

which are above and everlasting; and that with his faith so strengthened, and his separation from the world so widened and confirmed, and all the wishes of his heart so transferred from the earth that has deceived him to the inheritance that fadeth not away—Who does not see, that the afflicting process which the man has undergone, has transformed him into a more ethereal being than before; has loosened him from time, and riveted him with greater tenacity and determination than ever to the pursuits of eternity; has forced him as it were to seek his resources from above, and thus brought him to abide by the fountain of living waters; has riven him as it were from the world, and left him free to attach his loosened regards to the invisibles which stand at a distance away from him—so that now he can fill up his heart with heaven as his future home, and fill up his time with the service and the occupations of that holiness which is the way that leads to it?

You know that in the parable of the sower the deceitfulness of riches is a thorn which occupies the room and overbears the influence of the word of God upon the heart. But you also know that the cares of life are likewise thorns. It is therefore a very possible thing, that by the tribulation of sudden poverty one set of thorns may just be exchanged for another; and that by the ruminations and the anxieties and the absorbing thoughtfulness which the ruin of fortune brings in its rear, the things of heaven may as effectually be elbowed out of the place which belongs to them, as by all the splendours of affluence and all its fascinations. The only sorrow which such a reverse inflicts upon the bosom of the sufferer may be the sorrow of this world that worketh death. Time will show. The experience of the effect on the man's personal character and history will demonstrate whether the root of the matter be in him, and if he really be that believer on whom tribulation worketh patience, and patience such an experience of himself as will be a ground of hopefulness and joy to him. Prune away a branch from a tree that is already dead, and it will not be this operation that will revive it. Prune away some rank and excessive luxuriance from a tree that is living, and you will divert the hurtful flow of its vegetable moisture from the part where it is running too abundantly, and restore the proper tone and healthfulness to its whole circulation. And the same of man. His affections run sideway among the idols of sense and time that are around him. And God—whose husbandry we are—often by a severe but

salutary operation severs them away; and so diverts our inclinations from objects to which they cannot excessively tend without guilt or worldliness, and leads them in one ascending direction to Himself; and if this be the love of God—that we keep His commandments, a more faithful walk of holiness and a steadier perseverance in the way of new obedience are the fruits of His chastening visitation. And thus may you understand how accordant with human nature the affirmation of our Saviour is, when He speaks of Himself being the true vine, and His Father the husbandman—and then says, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it,” or as it should have been, “he pruneth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

But though the patience of our text, by being turned into perseverance, is made rather to signify the impulse and direction which calamities are fitted to give to the active principles of our nature, yet we are not to exclude a meek and unresisting endurance of suffering, as one of its most precious fruits on the character of him who is exercised thereby. There is a certain mellowness which affliction sheds upon the character—a softening that it effects of all the rougher and more repulsive asperities of our nature—a delicacy of temperament into which it often melts and refines the most ungainly spirit—just as when you visit a man from whose masculine and overbearing manner you wont to recoil when in the full flow and loudness and impetuosity of health he carried all before him, but whom you find to be vastly more amiable while after the hand of disease has for a time been upon him he still retains the meek hue of convalescence. It is not the pride of aspiring talent that we carry to heaven with us. It is not the lustre of a superiority which dazzles and commands and overawes that we bear with us there. It is not the eminence of any public distinction or the fame of lofty and successful enterprise. And should these give undue confidence to the man, or throw an aspect of conscious and complacent energy over him, he wears not yet the complexion of Paradise; and should God select him as His own, He will send some special affliction that may chasten him out of all which is uncongenial with the place of blessedness, and at length reduce him to its unmingled love and its adoring humility. Affliction has a kind of physical as well as moral power in sweetening the character and in impressing a grace and a gentleness upon it. It is purified by the simple process of passing through the fire.

"The fining-pot for silver and the furnace for gold," says Solomon; "but the Lord trieth the hearts." "For thou, O God, hast proved us; thou hast tried us as silver." "And when he hath tried me," says Job, "I shall come forth as gold."

But the use of affliction is not merely to better the quality of the soul; it is to prove this quality as it exists—"And patience, experience"—It furnishes him with a proof of God's love, in that he has been enabled to stand this trial with principles exalted by it, or at least unimpaired. And it also furnishes him with a proof of his own sincerity. It causes him to know that there is now that in his heart which can bear him up under the ills of the present life, and stimulate him in the pursuit of life everlasting. It makes him acquainted with the force and the steadfastness of his own character; and if his conscience can attest that amid all the pressure and distress of his earthly sufferings the matters of faith had still the practical ascendancy of his soul, and made him feel the present affliction to be light, and amply compensated for all its severity; this is to him a satisfying demonstration that his heart is now occupied and governed by principles which nature never originates, and which never do take possession of a human bosom till they are imparted by grace. This to him is a joyful evidence, not of the truth of the gospel—for that stands upon arguments of its own—but that the gospel has taken effect upon himself, and that he has now come personally under the regimen of that doctrine which is unto salvation.

'And experience, hope.' We beg to call your particular attention to the circumstance, that at an antecedent point in this train of consequences hope had already been introduced as one of them. Peace was made to emanate from faith, and joy also, and hope also. They who believed no sooner did so than they rejoiced in hope of the glory of God. But in their progress through the world they meet with tribulations; and it is said of them that they glory in these also—because of the final result of a process that may have been lengthened out for many days, after faith entered their hearts, and peace and hope sprang up as the direct and immediate effects of it. The hope of the fourth verse is therefore distinct from and posterior to the hope of the second; and it also appears to be derived from another source. The first hope is hope in believing, a hope which hangs direct on the testimony of God, such a hope as may be conceived to have arisen in the mind of Abraham on the very first communication

that God had with him, when He said, I will make of thee a great nation—having no other ground, in fact, than a belief in the veracity of the promiser, and fed and fostered by this sole consideration, that God hath said it, and shall He not do it?

Now there is not one here present to whom the gospel does not hold forth a warrant for so hoping. It declares the remission of sins to all who put faith in the declaration. By its sweeping term "whosoever," it makes as pointed an offer of eternal life to each, as if each had gotten a special intimation by an angel sent to him from heaven. If he do not believe, he of course cannot have any feelings that are at all appropriate to the joyful contents of the message which has been rendered to him. But if he do believe, there will be peace and joy and expectation—and these not suspended on the issue of any experience that is yet to come, but suspended, and that immediately, on a simple faith in the tidings of the gospel. They are called tidings of great joy; and sure we are that they would stand distinguished from all other tidings of this character, if they did not awaken the joy at the precise moment of their being credited. We know of no other tidings which can be called joyful, that do not make one rejoice at the moment of their being told and recognised to be true. You do not wait so many days or weeks till you feel glad at some good news that have come to your door. You are glad on the moment of their arrival, simply by giving them credit; and the gospel, the strict and etymological meaning of which is simply good news, will in like manner gladden every heart at the moment of its being relied upon as true. And it being good news of pardon and eternal life to all and every, he—one of the all—will, if he believe, take the whole comfort of the declaration to himself, and have peace with God through Jesus Christ, and rejoice in the hope of His glory.

Now the second hope is distinct from this first, and is grounded on distinct considerations—not upon what the believer sees to be in the testimony of God, but upon what he finds to be in himself. It is the fruit not of faith but of experience; and is gathered not from the word that is without, but from the feeling of what passes within. One would like to know how the first and the second hope find their adjustment and their respective places in the bosom of a disciple; and what is the precise addition which the latter of these brings to the former of them—whether the want of the second would darken and extinguish the first, by making him ashamed of it.

This matter can be illustrated, as before, by the case of Abraham. God in His first communication with him made him a twofold promise, one of which was to have its fulfilment many ages after, and another of which was to be fulfilled in his own lifetime. He promised that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed; and He also promised that, upon his leaving his own country, He should meet with him, and show him the land that his posterity were to inherit. Abraham, simply in virtue of faith, would hope for the accomplishment of both promises. He would both see afar off the day of Christ, and rejoice; and he would also leave his own country in the confident expectation of again meeting with God, and having the land of his descendants pointed out to him. Conceive him, then, to have been disappointed in this expectation—to have wandered in vain without once meeting the promised manifestation—to have had no other message or visitation from the heavens save the first, which, by warranting the hope of another that it did not realize, would give him ground to suspect that it was a delusive one—would not Abraham in this case have been ashamed of his rash confidence, and of his hasty enterprise, and of the vain and hazardous evils into which he had thrown himself? Would not the fallacy of the promise that he looked for in life lead him to withdraw all confidence in the promise that was to have its consummation at a period of exceeding distance away from him? And on the other hand, did not the actual fulfilment of the near brighten and confirm all his original expectations of the distant fulfilment? Were not all his subsequent meetings with God to him the pledges and the earnest of the great accomplishment that still lay in the depths of a very remote futurity? Did not they serve to convince him that the hope which he conceived at the first, and which had been so confirmed afterwards, was a hope that maketh not ashamed? And that hope which had nothing at first but the basis of faith to rest upon, did it not obtain a reinforcement of strength and of security when it further rested on the basis of experience?

I make a twofold promise to an acquaintance—the lesser part of which should be fulfilled to-morrow, and the latter on this day twelvemonth. If he believe me to be an honest man, then—simply appended to this belief—will there be a hope of the fulfilment of both; and for a whole day at least he may rejoice in this hope. To-morrow comes; and if to-morrow's promise be not fulfilled, who does not see that the hope which emanated

direct from faith will thereby be darkened and overturned, and that the man will be ashamed of his rash and rejoicing expectations? But if instead of a failure there is a punctual fulfilment, who does not also see that the hope he conceived at first obtains a distinct accession from the experience he met with afterwards; and that, without shame or without suspicion, he will now look to the coming round of the year with more confident expectation than ever? It is quite true that there is a hope in believing; but from this plain example you will perceive it to be just as true, that experience worketh hope.

Now it is just so in the gospel. There is a promise addressed in it, the accomplishment of which is far off; and a promise, the accomplishment of which is near at hand. The fulfilment of the one is the pledge or token for the fulfilment of the other. By faith in God we may rejoice in hope of the coming glory; and it will be the confirmation of our hope if we find in ourselves a present holiness. He who hath promised to translate us into a new heaven hereafter, has also promised to confer on us a new heart here. Directly appended to our belief in God's testimony may we hope for both these fulfilments; but should the earlier fulfilment not take place, this ought to convince us that we are not the subjects of the latter fulfilment. A true faith would insure to us both; but as the one has not cast up at its proper time, neither will the other cast up at its time—and having no part nor lot in the present grace, we can have as little in the future inheritance.

Let us therefore not be deceived. You hear people talk of their peace with God, while art and malignity and selfishness are at full work in their unregenerate bosoms—while no one evidence is apparent of any gracious influence at all having been shed abroad in their hearts—while the nearer promise has had no fulfilment upon them, though guaranteed by the same truth with the more remote and ulterior one, and though the same God who ordains life everlasting also ordains all the heirs of it to be conformed to the image of His Son—and no one enters upon the inheritance on the other side of death, without the Spirit being given to him as the earnest of his inheritance on this side of death. By this test then let us examine ourselves; and have done, conclusively done, with that odious and hypocritical slang into which the terms of orthodoxy and all the phrases of common-place professorship enter so abundantly, at the very time perhaps when the heart rankles with purposes of

mischief—or in the contest between faith and sense, the latter has gained a wretched ascendancy over it. Should this be the melancholy condition of any professor who now hears us, let him rest assured that he has lost the things that he has wrought, that he has the whole of his original distance from God to recover anew, that he has to lay again the foundation, and has in short to do all over again. The promise of life eternal is still addressed to him, but the promise of meetness for it in a holy and renewed character goes along with it; and this present world is the place where it must be realized—and it is only by making himself sure of repentance here, and of the clean heart here, and of the right spirit here, that he can make himself sure of his calling and election hereafter. In the language of the apostle, then, work out your salvation, and labour with all diligence unto the full assurance of hope unto the end.

We shall be happy if we have succeeded in impressing a clear distinction upon your minds between the hope of faith and the hope of experience, and how if the latter is wanting the former on that account may come to be darkened and extinguished altogether. But remember you are not to wait for the second hope till you conceive the first. It is the first, in fact, which draws the second in its train. It is the first which originates a purifying influence upon the soul. It is in proportion to the strength and habitual ascendancy of the first over the soul, that such a character is formed as may furnish the second with a solid basis to rest upon. It is the hope of the second verse which germinated the whole of that process that led at length to the hope of the fourth verse. You cannot be too sure of the truth of God's sayings. You cannot have too much peace and joy in thinking that the remission of sins is preached unto all, and that you are one of these all. There is a hope here which ought to arise on the instant of belief arising in the mind, and so far is this from superseding the hope of experience, that it will in fact bring the very feelings and raise the very fruits upon the character of the believer, which will cause the hope of experience to come surely and in succession to the hope of faith. Our best advice for brightening the second hope to the uttermost, is that you keep alive the first hope to the uttermost. Your experience will be bright just in proportion as your faith is bright; and it is just if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and if ye be not moved away from the hope of the gospel which ye have heard, that you will at length be presented holy and unblamable and unreprouable in the sight of God.

LECTURE XIX.

ROMANS V. 5.

"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us."

You are already, we trust, sufficiently familiarized to the distinction that has been offered between the hope of faith and the hope of experience. God promises to all who trust in Him that He will give them an inheritance on the other side of death, and that He will also give them, in the shape of certain personal graces and endowments, an earnest of the inheritance on this side of it. On the very first moment that you hear these promises, if you believe in the honesty of both, you will hope for the fulfilment of both; and this is the hope of faith. Should the promise that is of earlier fulfilment come to pass at its proper time, this will be to you a satisfactory confirmation of your first belief, and of the hope that comes out of it; and you will look forward with surer anticipation than ever to the latter of the two fulfilments. This is the hope of experience—a hope that brightens with the growth of grace in the person of the believer, and with every new finding within himself of the working of that Spirit of holiness by which he is made meet for the everlasting abodes of holiness. In this way there is formed a distinct and subsequent ground of hope, additional to the original one. The original ground was your faith in the honesty of the promiser, that He would fulfil all His engagements. The additional ground is your actual experience of His punctuality, in having liquidated those of His engagements which had become due. It operates like a first instalment, which when paid with perfect readiness and sufficiency certainly brightens all the hope of a thorough fulfilment of the various articles of agreement which you had when it was first entered upon. And thus it is that though there is a hope in the second verse that is appended immediately to your faith in God—there is also a hope in the fourth verse that has been wrought in you by experience.

You must also be sensible what the effect would have been

had there been a failure instead of a fulfilment of that promise which falls to be accomplished first. It would have darkened and overthrown not merely your hope of the near but also your hope of all the ulterior good things that you had been led to depend upon. There is nothing which brings the feeling of shame more directly into the mind than the failure of some confident or too fondly indulged expectation. "They shall be greatly ashamed that trust in graven images." "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me." "And lest," says the apostle, "we should be ashamed in the same confident boasting."

'Because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.' The love of God may signify either our love to God, as in the passage—"This is the love of God, that ye keep His commandments;" or it may signify God's love to us, as in the passage—"In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." In the verse under consideration, we apprehend that the love of God must be taken according to the latter signification. It is true that—speaking strictly and literally—one being when kind to another sheds upon him the fruits of that kindness rather than the kindness itself. But the use of language has been so far extended as to admit of the latter expression. It is quite according to established usage to say, "I have received much kindness from another," though I have properly received nothing but his money or his attentions or his patronage. And in like manner do I receive love from God when I receive the Holy Ghost. And as a beneficent proprietor is said to shed abroad of his liberality among the habitations of the poor, when he causes food or raiment or fuel to enter into their houses—so does God shed abroad of His love in our hearts, when He sends the Holy Ghost to take up His residence, and there to rule by His influences.

It is through the Spirit of God that the spirit of man is borne up in the midst of adversities. It is He who upholds the perseverance of a disciple when all that is around him lowers and looks dismal. It is He who causes a luminousness to rest on those eternal prospects which are seen afar through the dark vista of a pilgrimage which is lined on the right hand and on the left with sorrows innumerable. It is when a bitterness comes upon man which is only known to his own heart, that a secret balm is often infused along with it, with the joy of which a stranger does not intermeddle. There is a history of the soul

that is unseen by every eye, but intimately known and felt by its conscious proprietor; and often can he testify of a tribulation that would have overwhelmed him to the death, had not a powerful influence from on high supported him under it. And when the season of it at length passes over his agitated spirit, and leaves the fruit of a solid peace, and an augmented righteousness behind it, you perceive how in him the process is exemplified of tribulation working in him a more strenuous perseverance in all the habits and principles of Christianity, and of perseverance working in him such an experience of himself as argues his state of discipline and preparation for another world, and of this experience working in him the hope that He who thus fulfils upon him the guidance in time that He has promised, will finally bestow upon him the glory He has promised in eternity.

He, says the apostle, who hath wrought us for immortality is God, who hath also given to us the earnest of the Spirit, and therefore we are confident.

It is very true that an early fulfilment is often the satisfying token of some later fulfilment, and that grace imparted to us on this side of death is a pledge that glory will be conferred upon us on the other side of death; and in particular that the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon us so as to work a meetness for the inheritance, is symptomatic of our future translation into the inheritance itself, and thus superadds the hope of experience to the hope of faith. But you must remark that the very hope of faith—the hope which you conceive at the outset of your belief in the gospel—is wrought in you by the same Holy Ghost. It is not of yourself—it is the gift of God. It was by demonstration of the Spirit that your eyes were opened at the first to perceive the truth of the promises, and by a fuller demonstration He can make you see this still more clearly, and rejoice in it still more confidently than before. The effect then of an additional and subsequent supply of this divine influence is, not merely to furnish you with a pledge upon earth of the preferment that awaits you in heaven, and so to furnish you with a new ground of hope upon the subject—even the ground of experience, but it is also to brighten the ground upon which all your hope rested originally—even the ground of faith. It is to give you a more full and satisfying manifestation of the direct truth of God in the gospel than before. The Holy Ghost does not merely put into your hand another and a distinct hold, by giving you in the performance of an earlier promise a proof of the sureness

with which the later promise shall be performed also, but He strengthens the hold which you had by faith upon the promises prior to all experimental confirmation of them in your own personal history. He does not merely supply that evidence for the truth of the gospel promise which is seen by the eye of experience, but He also casts an additional light on the evidence that you had at the first, and which is only seen by the eye of faith. Never in the course of the believer's pilgrimage—never does the hope of experience supersede the hope of faith. So far from this, in the very proportion that experience grows in breadth does faith grow in brightness. And it is this last which still constitutes the sheet-anchor of his soul, and forms the main aliment of its peace and joy and righteousness. It is well, that on looking inwardly to himself he sees the growing lineaments of such a grace and such a character forming upon his person as vouch him to be ripening for eternity. But along with this process, will he also look outwardly upon God in Christ, and there see, in constantly increasing manifestation, the truth and the mercy and the unchangeableness of his reconciled Father, as by far the firmest and stablest guarantees of his future destiny. The same agent, in fact, who brings about the one effect, brings about the other. He causes you not merely to see yourself to be an epistle of the Spirit of God, and to read therein the marks of your personal interest in the promises, but He also causes you to see these promises as standing in the outward record, invested with a light and an honesty and a freeness which you did not see at the first revelation of them—so that it is not only the hope of experience which is furnished you anew as you proceed on the career of actual Christianity, but in proportion to your advancement on this career are you also made to abound more and more in the hope of faith through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Thus we trust you perceive that the good works and the graces of personal religion not merely supply you with fresh evidences for your hope, but also brighten your original ones. They cast backwards as it were a good reflex influence on the faith from which they emanated. It is said of the Holy Ghost, that He is given to those who obey Him. Follow out the impulse of a conscience which He hath enlightened in every practical business that you have on hand, and you will find as the result of it a larger supply of that light which makes clearer than before all those truths and promises of Christianity on which a firm dependence may be laid by an act of believing. It is thus also,

that if you keep the sayings of Christ He will manifest Himself; and though works are of no value unless they are wrought in faith, yet the very doing of them is followed up by such larger revelations of the truth and doctrine of God, that by works is your faith made perfect.

Give us a man walking in darkness and having no light, from whose mind the comfort of the promises is fading away, and whose fits of thought and pensiveness speak him to be on the borders of some deep approaching melancholy. It is sin in all probability that has conducted him onwards to this mental dejection, and that not merely by its having obliterated those traces of personal character the observation of which had at one time wrought the hope of experience in his bosom, but by its having grieved and exiled for a season the Holy Spirit, whose office as a Revealer and as a Remembrancer of all truth is therefore suspended, and who has therefore left the tenement of his heart desolate and uncheered by that hope of faith which shone in a beam of gladness on the very outset of his Christianity. For the treatment of such a spiritual patient we are often bidden tell him of the fulness that there is in Christ; to tell him of the power which lies in His blood for turning guilt of the most crimson dye into the snow-white of purest innocence; and to tell him of the perfect willingness that there is in God to hold out to him over the mercy-seat the sceptre of forgiveness, by the touching of which it is that he enters anew into reconciliation before Him. And it is right—it is indispensably right to tell him of all this; but we would tell him more. The voice of man, if the visitations of the Spirit do not go along with it, will not force an entrance, even for these welcome accents of mercy, into the heart that He had so recently abandoned; and to win the return of this gracious and all-powerful monitor, we would bid him work for it. We would tell him, that it is by toiling and striving and painstaking he must recover the distance which he has lost, and call the departed light and departed influence back again. If there be a remaining sense of duty in his heart, we bid him work with all his might to prosecute its suggestions, and never cease to ply his labours of obedience till He who still it appears is whispering through the organ of conscience what he ought to do shall be so far satisfied with the probation, as again to shed a sufficient manifestation on the doctrines which he must never cease to contemplate; and this not merely to restore to him the hope of experience, but to revive in him the

hope of faith; and—fruit of penitential labour as well as of penitential meditation—to make his light break forth again as the morning, and his health to spring forth speedily.

This holds out to us another view of the indissoluble alliance that obtains between the faith of Christianity and the obedience of Christianity. It is not saying all for this, to say that the former originates the latter. It is saying still more to say that the latter strengthens and irradiates the former. The genuine faith of the gospel never can encourage sin, for sin expels from our hearts that Spirit who perpetuates and keeps alive faith in them. And by every act of disobedience there is a wound inflicted on the peace and joy which a belief in the gospel ministers to the soul. It is by practically walking up to the suggestions of this heavenly monitor that we brighten within us all His influences; and thus, as the result of a strict and holy practice, is there a clearer and fuller light reflected back again on the very first principles from which it emanated—so that Antinomianism, after all, is very much an affair of theory, and can only be exemplified in the lives of those who either profess the faith or imagine that they possess it, when they are utter strangers to it. The real faith which is unto salvation not only originates all the virtues of the gospel, but—should these virtues decay into annihilation—it also would fall back again to non-existence along with them; and on the other hand, it uniformly grows with the growth, and strengthens with the strength of a man's practical Christianity.

On two distinct grounds therefore do we urge on every believer a most persevering strenuousness under every temptation and difficulty in all the ways of righteousness. The first is, that he may brighten his personal evidences of being indeed one of those whom God is enriching and beautifying with grace in time, and thus will he strengthen that basis on which the hope of experience rests, when it looks forward to a preferment of glory in eternity. The second is, that he may strengthen that very faith by which he relied at the first on the promises both of grace here and of glory hereafter, for after all it is by faith he stands, and the whole of his spiritual life will forthwith go into decay, should he only look to the hope reflected from himself, instead of drawing it direct, and in chief abundance, from the Saviour. An exuberance of fresh and healthy blossom upon a tree affords a cheering promise of the fruit that may be expected from it; but what should we think of the soundness of that man's antici-

pations who should cut across the stem because he thought it independent of the root, which both sent forth this beauteous efflorescence and can alone conduct it to full and finished maturity? And the same of spiritual as of natural husbandry. Were there no foliage, no fruit could be looked for—yet still it is union with the root which produced the one and will bring on the other. And in like manner, if there be no foliage of grace in time, there will be no fruit of glory in eternity. But still it is by abiding in Christ that the whole process is begun and carried forward, and will at length be perfected. Give up the hope of faith because you have now the hope of experience, and you imitate precisely the man whom the leaves had made so sanguine of his dressed and supported vine which he had trained along the wall, that he cut asunder the stem and trusted to the abundance of his foliage. And therefore we reiterate in your hearing, that the hold of faith is never to be let go; and that from Christ, who ministers all the nourishment which comes to the branches, you are never to sever yourselves; and that the habit of believing prayer, which is the great and perpetual aliment of all virtuous practice, is never to be given up: and thus it is that let the hope of the fourth verse brighten to any conceivable extent upon you from the light which is reflected by your person, yet still it is the faith by which you are justified, and the hope of the second verse directly emanating therefrom, that form the radical elements of your sanctification here, and your meetness for the inheritance hereafter.

LECTURE XX.

ROMANS V. 6-11.

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die : yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

FROM the preceding verses we gather that a believer at the very outset of his faith may legitimately hope for the fulfilment of all God's promises. Some of these take effect upon him in time, and form the pledges and the earnestings of those further accomplishments which are to take place in eternity—thus affording a basis on which to rest the hope of experience. It is true that they are the greater things which are to follow. The glory that is hereafter will greatly exceed all the glimpses and all the tokens of it with which we are favoured here ; and it may be thought that because we obtain small things now it does not follow that we are to look for greater things afterwards. A man may both be able and willing to advance the small sum which he promises to bestow on me to-morrow ; but it does not certainly ensue from this that he will be either able or willing to grant me the large sum promised on this day twelvemonth. Did the great things come first, we would have less hesitation in expecting the small things that were afterwards to be forthcoming. But when the order is the reverse of this, when the earlier instalments are but minute and insignificant fractions of the entire and final engagement—it may be allowed us perhaps to suspend our confidence, ere we can be sure, from the puny samples on hand, of that rich and magnificent sum of blessedness to which the gospel of Jesus Christ has pointed our expectations.

In the succeeding verses we have an argument that is eminently fitted to overbear this diffidence, and which both explains to us why we have received our present fulfilments, and why we may

rejoice in the assured hope of all our future ones. On our first acceptance of Christ by faith, all that we obtain is peace with God, who ceases to be our enemy, and lifts away from us that hand of threatened vengeance which has already been laid upon Him who for us hath borne the whole burden of it. It is a great thing no doubt thus to be delivered from wrath and hostility. But you can conceive the work of reconciliation to go no further than this. It might have been nothing more than the reconciliation of the judge with the prisoner, when he acquits and dismisses him. It might have been the simple letting off of a criminal from punishment, or the mere ceasing to be an adversary, without passing onwards to the new character of a benefactor and a patron. But when God in ceasing to be an enemy becomes a friend—when, instead of being dealt with as the objects of His displeasure, we are dealt with as the objects of His love—when we get not only forbearance, but positive favour from His hands—this is something higher than the peace which accrues to us on the outset of our Christianity. There is an advance made in the scale of privilege; and if to be at peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord is in itself a great privilege, to receive the Holy Ghost from Him as the evidence of His love is a still greater one. And looking onward from this to futurity, it is not till we are refined into the consummate holiness, and raised into the pure and perfect happiness of heaven, that we shall reach the acme of that enjoyment which God hath prepared for the faithful disciples of His Son.

Now according to this process, the smaller things you will observe come first, and the greater things follow. There is a gradation and an ascent of privilege as you move forward in history—but then, to get what is less does not so warrant the expectation of getting what is more, as to get what is much warrants the expectation of getting what is less. ‘Surely the man who has given me the trifle which he promised, will not withhold from me the treasures that he has also promised,’ is not so sound a conclusion as ‘Surely the man who promised me a magnificent donation, and hath now actually made it good, will not break his word and promise, when they are merely staked on some paltry fulfilment that is still in reserve for me.’ If the lesser comes in the order of time before the greater, then the non-performance of the lesser would blast all our expectations of the greater, and make us ashamed of the confidence with which we cherished them. But, on the other hand, the performance

of the lesser does not so warrant our expectations of the greater, as if the order of the two fulfilments had been reversed. We might well be ashamed of our hope in the latter of the two, if disappointed in the earlier of the two. But if the earlier be at the same time the lesser of the two, we cannot from this comparison alone say with the apostle—as the lesser has turned out agreeably to our first hopes, how much more will the greater likewise so turn out?

Now it can be conceived, that though one present be smaller for us to receive than another, it may still have been given in such circumstances of difficulty or provocation as to argue a higher degree of generosity or good-will, and be altogether a greater and more substantial token of the giver's regard than the larger present will be, which is promised to be conferred on us afterwards. The fellow-captive in some hostile prison, whom I had perhaps insulted and reviled, and who in justice might have dealt with me as an adversary—should he, to save me from the agonies of thirst, make over his scanty allowance of water, and so entail these agonies upon himself, telling me at the same time, that in spite of all the insolence he had gotten from my hands he could not help feeling an unquenchable love for my person, and a no less unquenchable desire after my interests, and that if ever a happier time should restore us to liberty and to our native land, he would contribute of his influence and his wealth to the rising interests of my family—who does not see that even a single cup of cold water given in such circumstances, and with such assurances as these, may well warrant the highest hopes that can be entertained of his kindness? And should I, touched and overpowered by so striking a demonstration of it, and ashamed of all my former perverseness, henceforth bind myself in gratitude and duty to this benefactor—may I not well argue, that surely the man who ministered to me, though in the smaller, and did so at such an expense of suffering to himself, and also in the face of all the injury I had done unto him, will now acquit himself to the full of the larger bounties which he held out in expectation, should I now return with him his devoted friend to the country of his fathers; and he, replaced in the ample sufficiency that belongs to him, should have it in his power, by an easy and a willing sacrifice, to translate me into all the comfort and all the independence which he engaged to render me?

There is a parallel to this in the gospel. Forgiveness is a

smaller boon than positive favour; and all the tokens of this favour which are bestowed upon us in time, are smaller than that rich and full and ever-during expression of it which awaits us in eternity. Should the promise of the smaller not be fulfilled when it becomes due, this would make us ashamed of all the expectations we had cherished of the larger. And accordingly, the apostle, from having received the Holy Ghost here as a kind of earnest or first-fruits, is not ashamed of his hope for the glory of God which is to be revealed hereafter. But though this might save him from being ashamed of his high hopes in futurity, it is not enough to warrant the argument of 'how much more' that he comes forward with in the following verses. It is not a very conclusive way of reasoning to say—I have got a smaller thing according to promise, how much more then may I expect a greater thing? It would have applied better had the greater thing come first, and then you might have said, How much more, as he has given me the greater boon that he stood engaged to render, may I not hope for his punctuality with regard to the smaller? But, just as in the case of human illustration that we have already quoted, the first act of kindness, though smaller in the matter of it, may have been done in such circumstances of difficulty and provocation as to be a far more unquestionable evidence of regard than any future act of goodness possibly can be, however great in the matter of it—because done in circumstances of ease and good agreement. And these preparatory remarks will enable us to enter into the spirit and to estimate aright the strength and conclusiveness of the argument which follows.

Ver. 6.—We are not able to extricate ourselves from the prison-house of God's righteous condemnation. We had not strength for that perfect obedience which a relentless and immutable law has laid upon all its subjects; and even though we had, such obedience could only satisfy for itself, and at its own season. It could not cancel the guilt of another season. But the truth is, that we could neither do away the guilt of our past nor the pollution of our present history. We were in bondage to the power of corruption as well as to the fears of condemnation—living as totally without God as without hope—abandoned to the counsel of our own hearts, and taking no counsel and no reproof from Him whose right hand was upholding us continually. It was in these circumstances of provocation that Christ undertook for us. He stretched out His mediatorial hand for the

purpose of extending the boon of forgiveness—a smaller boon than favour, certainly; but remember it was a boon to the ungodly. It was a movement of kindness, forcing its way through an obstacle that might well have stifled and repressed it. It was an expression of love so ardent, that even impiety, in full and open and determined career, could not extinguish it. It was at the time of the world's greatest wickedness that He descended from on high, not to condemn it but to save it. It is true that the first effect of this benevolent undertaking was simply an acquittal to those who had been guilty; and this was but the prelude of greater things to follow. But this first thing was wrought out in the face of greatest provocation, and at the expense of most painful endurance. It was rendered unto men at the time when men were rioting at large, both against the law of conscience and the law of revelation. It was when every man had turned to his own way that God laid upon His Son the iniquities of us all. Our time of greatest regardlessness was His time of greatest regard. And on estimating the intensity of affection, not by the magnitude of its positive dispensations, but by the magnitude of resistance it must overcome, and of the sufferings it must undergo—it was at the outset of our redemption; it was at that due time when Christ died for the ungodly; it was in the act of making atonement for the sins of the people, out of which act the first though the smallest benefit that emerged was the forgiveness of the people—it was then nevertheless that the love of God in Christ, bearing all the condemnation of our unthankful species, and pouring out His soul unto the death for them—it was then that this love sent forth its most wondrous and most convincing manifestation.

Ver. 7.—The point insisted on by the apostle here is that Christ died for us when we were yet enemies in our heart toward Him. But it should also be kept in mind that His was no ordinary death, that they were not the pangs of a common dissolution which extorted such agonies of fear and such cries of bitter suffering, and drew out on the person of our Redeemer both in the garden and upon the cross such mysterious symptoms of distress too exquisite for human imagination, of an endurance far deeper than we have any conception of. It is evident from the whole history of the hour and the power of darkness, that though He had the whole strength of the Divinity to uphold Him there was a struggle to be made, and a hostility to be baffled, and an

awful enterprise of toil and of strenuousness to be gone through, under the severity of which our Saviour had well-nigh given way—that ere the victory was His, He had to travail in His strength, and to put forth all the greatness of it; and warring with principalities and powers, had, in the words of Isaiah, to tread in the wine-press alone, and trample on His enemies with fury, and to stain His raiment, and to wield the arm of His supernatural might, ere He brought down to the earth the strength that was opposed to Him. It should be recollected that the death of Christ was not in semblance merely, but, in real and substantial amount, an atonement for the sins of the world—that He tasted death not as an individual, but tasted it for every man—that on Him was laid the accumulated weight of all that wrath which an eternity would not have expended on the millions for whom He died—that there was the actual transference of God's avenging hand from the heads of the countless guilty He has redeemed to the head of this one innocent sufferer—and that from the moment He was led as a lamb to the slaughter to the moment of His crying "It is finished," and when He gave up the ghost, there was discharged upon the head of this great Sacrifice all the vials of a wrath which the misery everlasting—and that of a multitude which no man could number, could not have exhausted; there were condensed upon His soul all the agonies which but for Him the vast family of the redeemed would have borne.

But it is not here on the kind of death which our Saviour endured that the apostle founds his argument of God's love to us; it is on the kind of people whom He died for—even sinners. This peculiarizes and exalts the benevolence of Christ above all human benevolence. There is a devotedness of affection here of which there is no example in the history of our species. For a righteous man, that is a man free from blame or criminality, for a simply innocent man, there is scarcely any that would die; for a good man, one who rises above the level of mere innocence, one who is signalized by achievements of positive benevolence or heroic patriotism, some might die—like some disciples of Paul, who for his life would lay down their own necks—or like the members of some gallant band who would rally in defence of the worth and friendship that they revered—or like the martyrs of Christianity who died for the honours of its Founder, but not till He had evinced the highest sublime of goodness by dying for the worst and most worthless of mankind. It is on

this that the apostle lays the stress of his argument; and from this he infers, that even at the outset of our redemption, and when we had got nothing more than forgiveness, there was such a demonstration of God's affection for sinners as warranted the fullest expectation of all the higher blessings that we are to receive from His hand.

For observe, that though favour may be higher in the scale of privilege than forgiveness, and glory through eternity higher than grace in time, yet it was at the point when forgiveness was secured for the guilty—it was then that the love of God in Christ made its most decisive exhibition—it was then that it triumphed over difficulties which no longer exist—it was then that it leaped over a barrier which is now levelled into an open way of access between earth and heaven—it was then that human sinfulness rose in a smoke of abomination before the throne of God, unaccompanied as yet with that incense of a sweet-smelling savour which the sacrifice of Christ has since infused into it—it was then that the awful death of the atonement, a death never now to be repeated, had still to be endured. All these stood in the way of reconciliation; and though this be the first and the smallest boon that is conferred upon the sinner, yet conferred as it was in the midst of obstacles which no longer exist, and of sins that are now blotted out in the blood of the Lamb, so that God remembers them no more—this smallest boon, viewed as a demonstration of love and a pledge of future kindness, more than overpasses all the subsequent boons that can be rendered in circumstances where there is nothing to struggle with, and no barrier in the way of their accomplishment. So that the apostle is warranted in all his larger expectations after this. Much more then, being justified by His blood, we shall be translated into all the blessings of a positive salvation.

The love of a benefactor is not to be estimated by the magnitude of his gift, but by the exposure and the suffering that he incurred in rendering it. The gifts of God may go on progressively increasing through all eternity; but it was the first gift of reconciliation, which had to force its way through the host of impediments that stood between a holy Lawgiver and a sinful world. After these were removed, the following gifts came spontaneously and without interruption out of the exuberant wealth and liberality of the Godhead; so that from the very first we have the argument in all its entirety. If God spared not His own Son to reconcile a world that had nothing but guilt

and depravity to offer to His contemplation—how much more, now that atonement is made, will He bless and enrich all those who have fled to it for refuge, and whom He now beholds in the face of His anointed?

This then is an argument altogether addressed to the hope of faith, and may be seized upon and felt in the whole force of it, ere there is time for the hope of experience. The moment that one looks with a believing eye to the work of redemption, he may gather from it all the materials which make up this argument. He may there see, that Christ at that time died for the sinful, to bring about their agreement with God; and that at the present time Christ has not to die any more, and that in Him the guilt of sinfulness has been done away. ‘If when enemies we were reconciled by His death—how much more, now that we are reconciled, shall all the blessings that He died to purchase be lavished upon us abundantly?’ If when so many difficulties stood betwixt us He forced His way through them for the purpose of reaching forgiveness to the condemned—how much more, now that all is open and level and free in the road of communication between earth and heaven, will He out of the treasury of His fulness, shed upon us all the needful grace here, and translate us into all the promised glory hereafter? True, if the grace did not come, this might well blast and annihilate these fond anticipations. We cannot get to heaven without such a stepping-stone; and when we have reached this length, we can see more clearly and hope more confidently for the promised inheritance than before. But still the main light which rests upon this glorious futurity radiates upon it from the great and primary work of Christ’s undertaking as He did, and Christ’s doing as He did, for the guilty. And the reason why we have obtained the grace, and still the chief reason why we may look for the glory, is that seeing He did so much to reconcile and to justify—how much more, now that the heat and difficulty and strenuousness of the contest are all over, how much more may we not anticipate all the blessings of a positive salvation from His hand?

Finally, let it be observed of the ninth verse, that Paul speaks of himself and others in the character of believers, and as being already justified by the blood of Jesus. The force of the consideration lies in this—that seeing He shed His blood to justify us, at the time that we were unrepentant and unreconciled, and that to save us from the wrath that abideth on all who believe

not—how much more, now that this is done, and that, instead of dying any more, He has only to give in large and easy liberality out of His fulness—how much more, by the supplies of His grace and strength, will He save us from the wrath of those who shall finally fall away? The tribulations in which Paul gloried might not have wrought a more strenuous perseverance in the Christian course; but like certain hearers in the parable of the sower he might have been offended when persecution came, and actually have fallen away. Instead of patience working such an experience as made him hopeful that he was indeed a Christian, the defect and overthrow of his constancy might have given him the melancholy and convincing experience that he had indeed no lot or part in the matter. Instead of a thriving process it might have been a ruinous one; but grace, it appears from the result, was given to uphold him in a course of spiritual prosperity under all his outward tribulations; and he now hoped more than ever that God had manifested the special love that he bore by the Holy Ghost that was given to him. And how could it be otherwise, he goes on to argue, than that the Holy Ghost should be given? Would not He who did so much to justify, and at such an expense of suffering to Himself, would not He also sanctify when there was no suffering incurred by the process? Will not He who saved us by His blood then, much more save us by His Spirit now? Will not He who at that time delivered us by dying from the wrath due to the impenitent and ungodly—at this time when we are cleaving to Him in dependence and desire, deliver us by His grace from the sorer punishment of those who draw back to the perdition of the soul? There may be fatherly chastisements. There may be the infliction of a severe and salutary discipline. Should a professor sin the sin that is unto death, it will then be impossible to renew him again unto repentance. But if, instead of a hollow-hearted and hypocritical dissembler, there was really a sound principle of adherence and honest faith with him who has been overtaken in a fault—then that man will be saved, yet so perhaps as by fire. He will not escape the hand of chastisement in time, though he will escape the hand of vengeance in eternity. He will be cast down yet not destroyed. God will forgive the iniquity of his sin, but at the same time take vengeance upon him for his inventions. He will make him taste the bitterness of transgression, and give him the experimental demonstration of His own abhorrence to it, and render it mani-

fest as day that there is an utter and irreversible opposition between the indulgence of a sinner and the hope of a believer ; and rather than that he should miss the lesson, He will force it upon him with the authoritative severity of a master who has determined that He will not let him alone till he learn it ; and if one corrective ministration will not serve the purpose, He will come forward with another and another—still ringing this prophetic knell into the ear of him who is under discipline—"For all this mine anger is not turned away, but my hand is stretched out still." It is not from such wrath that a disciple is saved—But let it work him into the process of tribulation, and patience, and experience, and hope ; and from the wrath of eternity he will be saved—saved as if by fire—and verifying this word in his own person, that it is through manifold tribulations we shall enter into the kingdom of God.

LECTURE XXI.

ROMANS V. 10.

“ For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

ST. PAUL, who by the way is by far the most argumentative of all the apostles—and who, from being the most successful of them all, proves that argument is both a legitimate and a powerful weapon in the work of making Christians, sometimes undertakes to reason upon one set of premises, and then to demonstrate, how much more valid and irresistible is the conclusion which he tries to establish, when he is in actual possession of another and more favourable set of premises. In this way a great additional strength is made to accrue to his argument—and the “ how much more ” with which he finishes, causes it to come with greater power and assurance upon his readers ; and it is this which gives him the advantage of what is well known, both in law and in logic, under the phrase of *argumentum a fortiore*, or an argument which affirms a thing to be true in adverse and unpromising circumstances, and therefore far more worthy of being held true in likelier circumstances. It is quite a familiar mode of reasoning in common discourse. If a neighbour be bound to sympathize with the distresses of an unfortunate family, how much more when that neighbour is a relative ? If I obtained an offer of friendship from a man in difficulties, how much more may I count upon it should he now be translated into a state of sufficiency and ease ? If in the very heat of our quarrel, and under the discouragement of all my provoking insolence towards him, my enemy forbore the vengeance which he had the power to inflict, how much more, should the quarrel be made up, and I have been long in terms of reconciliation with him, may I feel myself secure from the effects of his indignation ? Such also is the argument of my text. There is one state of matters in which God sets forth a demonstration of friendship to the world ; and this is compared with the present and actual state of matters—more favourable than the former, and from which therefore the friend-

ship of God may be still more surely inferred, and still more firmly confided in. But it will be further seen, that in this short sentence of the apostle there lies a compound argument which admits of being separated into distinct parts. There is a reference made to a twofold state of matters, which by being resolved into its two particulars brings out two accessions of strength to the conclusion of our apostle, which are independent of each other. He in fact holds forth a double claim upon our understanding, and we propose to view successively the two particulars of which it is made up.

There is first then a comparison made between one state of matters and another state of matters which obtain in our earth—and there is at the same time a comparison made between one state of matters and another state of matters which obtain in heaven—and from each of these there may be educed an argument for strengthening the assurance of every Christian in that salvation which the gospel has made known to us.

Let us first look then to the two states upon earth; and this may be done either with a reference to this world's history, or with a reference to the personal history of every one man who is now a believer.

That point of time in the series of general history at which reconciliation was made, was when our Saviour said, "It is finished," and gave up the ghost. God may be said to have then become reconciled to the world, in as far as He was ready to enter into agreement with all who drew nigh in the name of this great propitiation. Now think of the state of matters upon earth previous to the time when reconciliation in this view was entered upon. Think of the strength of that moving principle in the bosom of the Deity, which so inclined him towards a world then lying in the depths of ungodliness—and from one end to another of it lifting the cry of rebellion against Him. There was no movement on the part of the world towards God—no returning sense of allegiance towards Him from whom they had revolted so deeply—no abatement of that profligacy which so rioted at large over a wide scene of lawless and thankless and careless abandonment—no mitigation of that foul and audacious insolence by which the throne of Heaven was assailed; and a spectacle full of offence to the unfallen was held forth—of a whole province in arms against the lawful Monarch of creation. Had the world thrown down its weapons of disobedience—had a contrite and relenting spirit gone previously forth among its generations

—had the light which even then glimmered in the veriest wilds of paganism but up to the strength and degree of its influence told aright on the moral sensibilities of the deluded and licentious worshippers—had they whose conscience was a law unto themselves but acted and followed on as they might under the guidance of its compunctious visitations—had there been anything like the forthgoing of a general desire, however faint, towards that unknown Being the sense and impression of whom were never wholly obliterated—then it might have been less decisive of God's will for reconciliation that He gave way to these returning demonstrations on the part of His alienated creatures, and reared a pathway of communication by which sinners may draw nigh unto God. But for God to have done this very thing when these sinners were persisting in the full spirit and determination of their unholy warfare—for Him to have done so, when, instead of any returning loyalty rising up to Him like the incense of a sweet-smelling savour, the exhalations of idolatry and vice blackened the whole canopy of heaven, and ascended in a smoke of abomination before Him—for Him to have done so at the very time that all flesh had corrupted its ways, and when, either with or without the law of revelation, God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually—in these circumstances of deep and unalleviated provocation, and when God might have eased Him of His adversaries by sweeping the whole of this moral nuisance away from the face of the universe which it deformed—for such a time to have been a time of love, when majesty seemed to call for some solemn vindication, but mercy could not let us go—Surely, if through such a barrier between God and the guilty, He in the longings of His desire after them formed a pathway of reconciliation, He never will turn Himself away from any who, cheered forward by His own entreaties, are walking upon that path. But if when enemies He himself found out an approach by which He might beckon them to enter into peace with Him, how much more, when they are so approaching, will He meet them with the light of His countenance, and bless them with the joys of His salvation?

But this argument may be looked to in another way. Instead of fixing our regards upon that point in the general history of the world when the avenue was struck out between our species and their offended Lawgiver, and through the rent veil of a

Saviour's flesh a free and consecrated way of access was opened for the guiltiest of them all—let a believer in Christ fix his regards upon that passage in his own personal history at which he was drawn in his desires and in his confidence to this great Mediator, and entered upon the grace wherein he now stands, and gave up his evil heart of unbelief, and made his transition out of darkness to the marvellous light of the gospel;—let him compare what he was when an alien from God through wicked works of his own, with what he is when a humble but confiding expectant of God's mercy through the righteousness of another. Who translated him into the condition which he now occupies? Who put into his heart the faith of the gospel? Who awakened him from the dormancy and unconcern of nature? Who stirred up that restless but salutary alarm which at length issued in the secure feeling of reconciliation? There was a time of his past life when the whole doctrine of salvation was an offence to him, when its preaching was foolishness to his ears, when its phraseology tired and disgusted him, when in light and lawless companionship he put the warnings of religious counsel and the urgency of menacing sermons away from his bosom—a time when the world was his all, and when he was wholly given over to the idolatry of its pursuits and pleasures and projects of aggrandizement—a time when his heart was unvisited with any permanent seriousness about God, of whom his conscience sometimes reminded him, but whom he soon dismissed from his earnest contemplation—a time when he may have occasionally heard of a judgment, but without one practical movement of his soul towards the task of preparation—a time when the overtures of peace met him on his way, but which he, in the impetuous prosecution of his own objects, utterly disregarded—a time when death plied him with its ever-recurring mementoes, but which he, overlooking the short and summary arithmetic of the few little years that lay between him and the last messenger, placed so far in the background of his anticipation, that this earth, this passing and perishable earth, formed the scene of all his solitudes. Is there none here present who remembers such a time of his bygone history, and with such a character of alienation from God and from His Christ as we have now given to it? And who, we ask, recalled him from this alienation? By whose guidance was he conducted to that demonstration either of the press or of the pulpit which awakened him? Who sent that afflictive visitation to his door which weaned his spirit from the

world, and wooed it to the deathless friendships and the ever-during felicities of heaven? Who made known to him the extent of his guilt, with the overpassing extent of the redemption that is provided for it? It was not he himself who originated the process of his own salvation. God might have abandoned him to his own courses, and said of him as He has done of many others, "I will let him alone, since he will have it so;" and given him up to that judicial blindness under which the vast majority of the world are now sleeping in profoundest lethargy, and withheld altogether that light of the Spirit which he had done so much to extinguish. But if, instead of all this, God kept by him in the midst of his thankless provocations, and while he was yet a regardless enemy made His designs of grace to bear upon him, and throughout all the mazes of his chequered history conducted him to the knowledge of Himself as a reconciling God, and so softened his heart with family bereavements, or so tore it from all its worldly dependencies by the disasters of business, or so shook it with frightful agitation by the terrors of the law, or so shone upon it with the light of His free Spirit, as to make it glad to escape from the treachery of nature's joys and nature's promises into a relying faith on the offers and assurances of the gospel—why, just let him think of the time when God did so much for him—and then think of the impossibility that God will recede from him now; or that He will cease from the prosecution of that work in circumstances of earnest and desirous concurrence on the part of the believer, which He Himself began in the circumstances either of his torpid unconcern or of his active and haughty defiance. The God who moved towards him in his days of forgetfulness will not move away from him in his days of hourly and habitual remembrance, and He who intercepted him in his career of rebellion will not withdraw from him in his career of new obedience, and He who first knocked at the door of his conscience, and that too in a prayerless and thankless and regardless season of his history, will not—now that he prays in the name of Christ, and now that his heart is set upon salvation, and now that the doctrine of grace forms all his joy and all his dependence,—He who thus found him a distant and exiled rebel, will not abandon him now that his fellowship is with the Father and with the Son. It is thus that the believer may shield his misgiving heart from all its despondencies. It is thus that the argument of the text goes to fortify his faith, and to perfect that which is lacking in it. It

is thus that the 'how much more' of the apostle should cause him to abound more and more in the peace and the joy of believing—and should encourage every man who has laid hold on the hope set before us to steady and confirm his hold still more tenaciously than before, so as to keep it fast and sure, even unto the end.

With a man who knows himself to be a believer this argument is quite irresistible; and it will go to establish his faith, and to strengthen it, and to settle it, and to make it perfect. But it is possible for a man really to believe, and yet to be in ignorance for a time whether he does so or not; and it is possible for a man to be in earnest about his soul, and yet not to have received that truth which is unto salvation; and it is possible for him to be actuated by a strong general desire to be right, and yet to be walking among the elements of uncertainty; and it is possible for him to be looking to that quarter whence the truths of the gospel are offered to his contemplation, and yet not to have attained the distinct or satisfying perception of them—thoroughly engaged in the prosecution of his peace with God—determinedly bent on this object as the highest interest he can possibly aspire after—labouring after a settlement—and under all the agonies of a fierce internal war, seeking and toiling and praying for his deliverance. It is at the point of time when faith enters the heart that reconciliation is entered upon—nor can we say of this man that he is yet a believer, or that he has passed from the condition of an enemy to that of a friend. And yet upon him the argument of the text should not be without its efficacy. It is such an argument as may be employed not merely to confirm the faith which already exists, but to help on to its formation that faith which is struggling for an establishment in the heart of an inquirer. It falls, no doubt, with fullest and most satisfying light upon the heart of a conscious believer, and yet it may be addressed, and with pertinency too, to men under their first and earliest visitations of seriousness; for—give me an acquaintance of whom I know nothing more than that his face is towards Zion—give me one arrested by a sense of guilt and of danger, and merely groping his way to a place of enlargement—give me a soul not in peace, but in perplexity, and in the midst of all those initial difficulties which beset the awakened sinner ere Christ shall give him light—give me a labouring and heavy-laden sinner, haunted by the reflection, as if by an arrow sticking fast, that the mighty question of his eternity is yet unresolved. There are many we fear amongst you to whom this

tremendous uncertainty gives no concern ; but give me one who has newly taken it up, and who in the minglings of doubt and despondency has not yet found his way to any consolation—and even with him may it be found that the same reason which strengthens the hope of an advanced Christian may well inspire the hope of him who has still his Christianity to find, and thus cast a cheering and a comforting influence on the very infancy of his progress. For if it was in behalf of a careless world that the costly apparatus of redemption was reared—if it was in the full front and audacity of their most determined rebellion that God laid the plan of reconciliation—if it was for the sake of men sunk in the very depths of ungodliness that He constructed His overtures of peace, and sent forth His Son with them amongst our loathsome and polluted dwelling-places—if to get at His strayed children He had thus to find His way through all those elements of impiety and ungodliness which are most abhorrent to the sanctity of His nature—Think you that the God who made such an advancing movement towards the men whose faces were utterly away from Him—is this a God who will turn His own face away from the man who is moving towards God, and earnestly seeking after Him if haply he may find Him ?

This argument obtains great additional force when we look to the state of matters in heaven at the time that we upon earth were enemies, and compare it with the state of matters in heaven now that we are actually reconciled, or are beginning to entertain the offers of reconciliation. Before the work of our redemption Jesus Christ was in primeval glory, and though a place of mystery to us, it was a place of secure and ineffable enjoyment—insomuch that the fondest prayer He could utter in the depths of His humiliation was, to be taken back again to the Ancient of days, and there to be restored to the glory which He had with Him before the world was. It was from the heights of celestial security and blessedness that He looked with an eye of pity on our sinful habitation—it was from a scene where beings of a holy nature surrounded Him, and the full homage of the Divinity was rendered to Him, and in the ecstasies of His fellowship with God the Father all was peace and purity and excellence—it was from this that He took His voluntary departure, and went out on His errand to seek and to save us. And it was not the parade of an unreal suffering that He had to encounter, but a deep and a dreadful endurance—it was not a triumphant promenade through this lower world, made easy over all its

obstacles by the energies of His Godhead, but a conflict of toil and of strenuousness—it was not an egress from heaven on a journey brightened through all its stages by the hope of a smooth and gentle return, but it was such an exile from heaven as made His ascent and His re-admittance there the fruit of a hard-won victory. We have nothing but the facts of revelation to guide or to inform us, and yet from these we most assuredly gather that the Saviour, in stepping down from the elevation of His past eternity, incurred a substantial degradation—that when He wrapped Himself in the humanity of our nature He put on the whole of its infirmities and its sorrows—that for the joy which He renounced He became acquainted with grief, and a grief too commensurate to the whole burden of our world's atonement—that the hidings of His Father's countenance were terrifying to His soul; and when the offended justice of the Godhead was laid upon His person, it required the whole strength of the Godhead to sustain it. What mean the agonies of the garden? What mean the bitter cries and complainings of abandonment upon the cross? What meaneth the prayer that the cup might pass away from Him; and the struggle of a lofty resolution with the agonies of a mighty and unknown distress; and the evident symptoms of a great and toilsome achievement throughout the whole progress of this undertaking; and angels looking down from their eminences, as on a field of contest, where a great Captain had to put forth the travailing of His strength, and to spoil principalities and powers, and to make a show of them openly? Was there nothing in all this, do you think, but the mockery of a humiliation that was never felt—the mockery of a pain that was never suffered—the mockery of a battle that was never fought? Yes, be assured that there was on that day a real vindication of God's insulted majesty. On that day there was the real transference of an avenging hand from the heads of the guilty to the head of the innocent. On that day one man died for the people, and there was an actual laying on of the iniquities of us all. It was a war of strength and of suffering in highest possible aggravation, because the war of elements which were infinite. The wrath which millions should have borne was all of it discharged. Nor do we estimate aright what we owe of love and obligation to the Saviour, till we believe that the whole of that fury—which if poured out upon the world would have served its guilty generations through eternity—that all of it was poured into the cup of expiation.

A more adequate sense of this might not only serve to awaken the gratitude which slumbers within us and is dead—it might also, through the aid of the argument in our text, awaken and assure our confidence. If when we were enemies Christ ventured on an enterprise so painful—if when loathsome outcasts from the sacred territory of heaven He left the abode of His Father, and exchanged love, and adoration, and congenial felicity among angels, for the hatred and persecution of men—if when the agonies of the coming vengeance were still before Him, and the dark and dreary vale of suffering had yet to be entered upon, and He had to pass under the inflictions of that sword which the Eternal God awakened against His fellow, and He had still to give Himself up to a death equivalent in the amount of its soreness to the devouring fire, and the everlasting burnings, which but for Him believers would have borne—if, when all this had yet to be travelled through, He nevertheless, in His compassionate longing for the souls of men, went forth upon the errand of winning them to Himself—let us just look to the state of matters then, and compare it with the state of matters now. Christ has there ascended on the wings of victory, and He is now sitting at God's right hand, amid all the purchased triumphs of His obedience; and the toil, and the conflict, and the agony are now over; and from that throne of mediatorship to which He has been exalted is it His present office to welcome the approaches of all who come, and to save to the uttermost all who put their trust in Him. And is it possible, we would ask, is it possible that He who died to atone, now that He lives will not live to make intercession for us? Can the love for men which bore Him through a mighty and a painful sacrifice not be strong enough to carry Him onwards in peace and in triumph to its final consummation? Will He now abandon that work which His own hands have so laboriously reared?—or leave the cause for which He has already sustained the weight of such an endurance in the embryo and unfinished state of an abortive undertaking? Will He cast away from Him the spoils of that victory for which He bled? and how can it be imagined for a moment, but by such dark and misgiving hearts as ours, that He whose love for a thankless world carried Him through the heat and the severity of a contest that is now ended, will ever, with the cold and forbidding glance of an altered countenance, spurn an inquiring world away from Him?

The death of a crucified Saviour, when beheld under such a

view, is the firm stepping-stone to confidence in a risen Saviour. You may learn from it that His desire and your salvation are most thoroughly at one. Of His good-will to bring you into heaven He has given the strongest pledge and demonstration, by consecrating with His own blood a way of access through which sinners may draw nigh. And now that as our forerunner He is already there—now that He has gone up again to the place from which He arose—now that to the very place which He left to die, that the barrier to its entrance from our world might be moved away, He has ascended alive and in glory, without another death to endure—for death has no more the dominion over Him—will He ever do anything to close that entrance which it has cost Him so much to open? Will he thus throw away the toil and the travail of His own soul, and reduce to impotency that apparatus of reconciliation which He himself has reared, and that at an expense equal to the penance of many millions through eternity? What He died to begin, will He not now live to carry forward? and will not the love which could force a way through the grave to its accomplishments—now that it has reached the summit of triumph and of elevation which He at present occupies, burst forth and around the field of that mighty enterprise which was begun in deepest suffering and will end in full and finished glory?

This is a good argument in all the stages of a man's Christianity. Whether he has found or is only seeking—whether he be in a state of faith or in a state of inquiry—whether a believer, like Paul and many of the disciples that he was addressing, or an earnest and convinced sinner groping the way of deliverance and labouring to be at rest—there may be made to emanate from the present circumstances of our Saviour, and the position that He now occupies, an argument either to perpetuate the confidence where it exists, or to inspire it where it has no existence. If when an enemy I was reconciled, and that too by His death—if He laid down His life to remove an obstacle in the way of my salvation, how much more, now that He has taken it up, will He not accomplish that salvation? It is just fulfilling His own desire. It is just prospering forward the very cause that His heart is set upon. It is just following out the facilities which He himself has opened, and marching onward in glorious procession to the consummation of those triumphs for which He had to struggle His way through a season of difficulties that are now over. It is thus that the be-

liever reasons himself into a steadier assurance than before, and that peace may be made to flow through his heart like a mighty river, and resting on the foundation of Christ, he comes to feel himself in a sure and wealthy place, and the good-will of the Saviour rises into an undoubted axiom—so as to chase away all his distrust, and cause him to delight himself greatly in the riches of his present grace and in the brightening certainty of his coming salvation.

And this view of the matter is not only fitted to heighten the confidence that is already formed, but also to originate the confidence that needs to be inspired. It places the herald of salvation on a secure and lofty vantage-ground. It seals and authenticates the offer with which he is intrusted, and with which he may go round among the guiltiest of this world's population. It enables him to say that for guilt, even in the season of its most proud and unrepentant defiance, did Christ give Himself up unto the death, and that to guilt, even in this state of hardihood, Christ in prosecution of His own work has commissioned him to go with the overtures of purchased mercy—and should the guilt which has stood its ground against the threatenings of power feel softened and arrested by pity's preventing call, the preacher of forgiveness may affirm in his Master's name, that He who for the chief of sinners bowed Himself down unto the sacrifice will not, now that He has arisen a Prince and a Saviour, stamp a nullity upon that contest the triumph of which is awaiting Him, and the bitterness of which has passed away. He will not turn with indifference and distaste from that very fruit which He himself has fought for. But if for guilt in its full impenitency He dyed His garments and waded through the arena of contest and of blood—then, should the most abandoned of her children begin a contrite movement towards Him, it is not He who will either break the prop for which he feels, or quench his infant aspiration. He will look to him as the travail of His own soul, and in him He will be satisfied.

We know not what the measure of the sinfulness is of any who now hears us. But we know that however foul his depravity, and however deep the crimson dye of his manifold iniquities may be, the measure of the gospel warrant reaches even unto him. It was to make an inroad on the territory of Satan, and reclaim from it a kingdom unto Himself, that Christ died; and we speak to the farthest off in guilt and alienation amongst you—take the overture of peace that is now brought to

your door, and you will add to that kingdom which He came to establish, and take away from that kingdom which He came to destroy. The freeness of this gospel has for its guarantee the honour of Him who liveth and was dead. The security of the sinner and the glory of the Saviour are at one; and with the spirit of a monarch who had to fight his way to the dominion which was rightfully his own, will He hail the returning allegiance of every rebel as a new accession to His triumphs, as another trophy to the might and the glory of His great undertaking.

But amid all this latitude of call and of invitation, let me press upon you that alternative character of the gospel to which we have often adverted. We have tried to make known to you how its encouragements rise the one above the other to him who moves towards it. But it has its corresponding terrors and severities, which also rise the one above the other to him who moves away from it. If the transgressor will not be recalled by the invitation which we have now made known to him, he will be riveted thereby into deeper and more hopeless condemnation. If the offer of peace be not entertained by him, then in the very proportion of its largeness and generosity will the provocation be of his insulting treatment in having rejected it. Out of the mouth of the Son of man there cometh a two-edged sword. There is pardon, free as the light of heaven, to all who will. There is wrath, accumulated and irretrievable wrath, to all who will not. "Kiss the Son, therefore, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little: blessed only are they who put their trust in Him."

It is the most delusive of all calculations to put off the acceptance of the gospel because of its freeness, and because it is free at all times, and because the present you think may be the time of your unconcern and liberty, and some distant future be the time of your return through that door which will still be open for you. The door of Christ's mediatorship is ever open, till death put its unchangeable seal upon your eternity; but the door of your own heart, if you are not receiving Him, is shut at this moment, and every day is it fixing and fastening more closely; and long ere death summon you away, may it have settled immovably upon its hinges, and the voice of Him who standeth without and knocketh may be unheard by the spiritual ear; and therefore you are not made to feel too much though you feel as earnestly as if 'now or never' was the alternative on which you were suspended. It is not enough that the Word of

God—compared to a hammer—be weighty and powerful; the material on which it works must be capable of an impression. It is not enough that there be a free and forcible application; there must be a willing subject. You are unwilling now, and therefore it is that conversion does not follow. The probability is, that to-morrow you will be still more unwilling; and therefore, though the application be the same, the conversion is still at a greater distance away from you. And thus, while the application continues the same the subject hardens, and a good result is ever becoming more and more unlikely; and thus may it go on till you arrive upon the bed of your last sickness at the confines of eternity; and what, we would ask, is the kind of willingness that comes upon you then? Willing to escape the pain of hell—this you are now, but yet not willing to be a Christian. Willing that the fire and your bodily sensations be kept at a distance from each other—this you are now, for who of you at present would thrust his hand among the flames? Willing that the frame of your animal sensibilities shall meet with nothing to wound or to torture it—this is willingness of which the lower animals, incapable of religion, are yet as capable as yourself. You will be as willing then for deliverance from material torments as you can be now; but there is a willingness which you want now, and which in all likelihood will then be still more beyond the reach of your attainment. If the free gospel do not meet with your willingness now to accept and to submit to it, neither may it then. And we know not, my brethren, what has been your experience in deathbeds; but sure we are that both among the agonies of mortal disease and the terrors of the malefactor's cell Christ may be offered—and the offer be sadly and sullenly put away. The free proclamation is heard without one accompanying charm; and the man who refused to lay hold of it through life, finds that in the impotency of his expiring grasp he cannot apprehend it. And oh, if you but knew how often the word of faith may fall from the minister, and the work of faith be left undone upon the dying man, never would you so postpone the purposes of seriousness, or look forward to the last week of your abode upon earth as to the convenient season for winding up the concerns of a neglected eternity.

If you look attentively to the text, you will find that there is something more than a shade of difference between being reconciled and being saved. Reconciliation is spoken of as an event that has already happened—salvation as an event that is to

come. The one event may lead to the other; but there is a real distinction between them. It is true that the salvation instanced in the preceding verse is salvation from wrath; but it is the wrath which is incurred by those who have sinned wilfully after they had come to the knowledge of the truth—"when there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." Jesus Christ will save us from this by saving us from sin. He who hath reconciled us by His death will by His life accomplish for us this salvation. Reconciliation is not salvation—it is only the portal to it. Justification is not the end of Christ's coming—it is only the means to an ultimate attainment. By His death He pacified the Lawgiver; by His life He purifies the sinner. The one work is finished; the other is not so, but is only going on unto perfection. And this is the secret of that unwillingness which we have already touched upon. There is a willingness that God would lift off from their persons the hand of an avenger; but there is not a willingness that Christ would lay upon their persons the hand of a sanctifier. The motive for Him to apprehend them is to make them holy. But they care not to apprehend that for which they are apprehended. They see not that the use of the new dispensation is that they should be restored to the image they have lost, and for this purpose be purged from their old sins. This is the point on which they are in darkness; "and they love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds are evil." They are at all times willing for the reward without the service; but they are not willing for the reward and the service together. The willingness for the one they always have; but the willingness for both they never have. They have it not to-day; and it is not the operation of time that will put it in them to-morrow. Nor will disease put it in. Nor will age put it in. Nor will the tokens of death put it in. Nor will the near and terrific view of eternity put it in. It may call out into a livelier sensation than before a willingness for the reward; but it will neither inspire a taste nor a willingness for the service. A distaste for God and godliness, as it was the reigning and paramount principle of his life, so it may be the reigning and paramount principle of his deathbed. As it envenomed every breath which he drew, so it may envenom his last; and the spirit going forth to the God who gave it with all the enmity that it ever had, God will deal with it as an enemy.

LECTURE XXII.

ROMANS V. 11.

“And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”

IN the whole passage from the commencement of this chapter we have an account of the new feelings that are introduced by faith into the heart of a believer. The first is a feeling of peace with God, of whom we could never think formerly, if we thought of Him aright, but with the sensations of inquietude and terror. The second is a feeling of exultation in the hope of some glory and enlargement that are yet unrevealed—whereby we shall attain such an enjoyment in His presence, and in the view of His perfections, as we can never reach in this world. The third is a feeling of exultation, even in the very crosses and tribulations of our earthly pilgrimage, from the process which they give rise to in our own characters—a process that manifests a work of grace here, and so serves to confirm all our expectations of a harvest of glory and blessedness hereafter. And indeed how can it be otherwise, the apostle reasons. He hath already given us His Son—will He not with Him freely give us all things? He hath already evinced His regard by sparing not His well-beloved, but surrendering Him to the death of a sore and heavy atonement for us, at the time that we were adversaries. And now that He has done so much in circumstances so unlikely, will He not carry on the work of deliverance to its final accomplishment when circumstances have changed?—when we who at one time stood afar off have now drawn nigh, and when He, who at one time shuddered with very apprehension at the dark vale of agony before Him, has now burst loose from His imprisonment, and finally escaped from the grief that was put upon His soul—has now a work of grace and of gladness to carry onwards to its full consummation? It is thus that the believer persuades himself into a still more settled assurance of the love of God to him than before; and whereas in the second verse he only rejoiced in the hope of the glory of God as it will be revealed to him in

future—he in this eleventh verse expresses a present rejoicing in this same God, delighting himself even now in the assurance of His present regard, and approaching Him with affectionate confidence even now under the sense of a present reconciliation.

The apostle in this passage makes use of such terms as are expressive of a gradation in the feelings of him who has admitted the faith of the gospel into his mind—each rising above the other, and marking an advance and a progress in Christian experience. It is well in the first instance to be set at rest from all that turbulence and alarm which conviction stirs up in the sinner's restless bosom, so as that he has "peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord." But it is better still when he can not only look at God as disarmed of all enmity towards him, but draws near unto Him in the confidence of a positive favour and friendship towards him, which will afterwards appear in some glorious manifestation: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." And it argues a still higher strength and steadfastness of feeling, when it can maintain itself under visitations which to flesh and blood would be otherwise overpowering: "And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also." And lastly, when there is both the positive experience of a gift in hand—even the Holy Ghost shed abroad upon us, and the resistless consideration that He who reconciled sinners by death will surely, now that they are reconciled, fully and conclusively save them, seeing that He is alive again—does the apostle, upon the strength of these, carry forward the believer to a still higher eminence in the divine life, where he can not only see afar off to the glorious regions of immortality and be glad, but where—in foretaste as it were of the joy of these regions felt by him now—he is glad in a sense of the already possessed friendship of God, glad in the intercourse of love and confidence with a present Deity.

There is much, we think, to be gathered from the consideration that joy in God forms one of the exercises of a Christian mind—a habit or condition of the soul into which every believer is or ought to be translated—a spiritual eminence that may be gained even in this world, and where the heart of man may experience a relish and imbibe a rapture which the world most assuredly knoweth not. To feel as if you were in the company of God—to have delight in this feeling—to triumph in God as

you would do in a treasure that had come into your possession—to dwell upon Him in fancy and with fondness, just as one friend dwells on the pleasing remembrance of another—to reach the ecstasies of devotion, and find that the minutes spent in communion with the heavenly and unseen witness are far the sweetest and the sunniest intervals of your earthly pilgrimage—to have a sense of God all the day long, and that sense of Him in every way so delicious as to make the creature seem vain and tasteless in the comparison—to have His candle shining in your heart, and a secret beatitude in Him of which other men have no comprehension—to bear about with you that cheerful trust in Him, and that cherished regard to Him, which children do to a father whose love they rejoice in and of whose good-will they are most thoroughly assured—to prize the peaceful Sabbaths and the sacred retirements when your soul can wing its contemplation toward His sanctuary, and there behold the glories of His character, at the very time that you can exult in confidence before Him. Thus to be affected towards God, and thus to glory and be glad in Him, is certainly not a common attainment; and yet we do not see how any true saint, any genuine disciple, can be altogether a stranger to it. “Rejoice evermore,” says the apostle of the New Testament; and “the Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice,” says the venerable patriarch of the Old. It is easy to walk in the rounds of a mechanical observation; it is easy to compel the hand to obedience against the grain and inclination of the heart; it is very easy to bear towards God the homage of respect, or fearfulness, or solemn emotion, and to render Him the outward obeisance and even something of the inward awe of worshippers. It is somewhat natural to feel the dread of His majesty, or to be visited by a sense of His terrors, or to be checked by the thought of His authority and power. And under the weight of all this impressive seriousness, it is even somewhat natural and easy to pray. But it has been well remarked, that praise is not so natural, nor so common, nor withal so easy as prayer—that delight in God is a rarer and a loftier condition of the soul than devoutness of feeling to God—that the sigh of repentance may be heard to ascend towards Him in many cases while the singing of the heart towards Him may only break forth in very few—that to cultivate with God as a matter of duty is a habit of far greater frequency than to do it as if by the impulse of a spontaneous feeling; so that to serve Him as a master to whom you are bound in the way of obliga-

tion is more the tendency of nature than to serve Him as a friend to whom you are bound by the willing affections of a heart that freely and fully and fearlessly loves Him. Is not the latter the far more enviable habit of the soul, the one to which you would like best to be translated?—to have the spirit of adoption and cry out *Abba, Father*, rather than to drivel before Him among the restraints and the reluctances of a slave?—to do His will here upon earth just as it is in heaven, that is, not as if by the force of a compulsory law, or as if under a stipulation to discharge the articles of a bond, or as if pursued by the unrelenting jealousy of a task-master, who exacts from you work, just as one man exacts from another the square and punctual fulfilment of a bargain? This is the way in which God's will is apt to be done, or attempted to be done, on earth; but it is really not the way in heaven—where He receives a willing homage from beings of a nature congenial with His own—where the doing of His pleasure is not a drudgery for the performance of which they get their meat and their drink, but where their meat and drink itself is to do the will of God—where, instead of a duty from which they would like to stand acquitted, it is their very heart's desire to be thus employed, and that without respite and without termination; above all, where the presence of God ever enlivens them, and their own pleasure is just His pleasure reflected back again. To carry the soul onward from the cares and the exercises and the manifold observations of an outward godliness to such an inward and angelic godliness as we now speak of, were to work upon it a greater transformation than to recall it from abandoned profligacy to the punctiliousness and the painstaking and all the decencies of a mere external reformation. And we again ask, whether you would not like to break forth upon this scene of spiritual enlargement, and be preferred to this nobler and freer elevation of character, and to walk before God as an attached and rejoicing friend, rather than as the slave of His tyranny and of your own terrors—in a word, to joy in the light of His benignant countenance, rather than to tremble under the apprehension of His frown; and instead of submissively toiling at what you feel to be a task, to spring forth on the career of obedience with the alacrity of one whose heart is glad in God, and who takes pleasure in all His will and in all His ways?

You all see the one style of godliness to be of a far higher and more celestial pitch than the other, and therefore of course at a greater distance from that state of alienation which you all

occupy by nature. The very description of such a godliness may serve to convince us how wide the disparity is between the moral element of earth and the moral element of heaven; and this is a lesson which we should like to urge on two classes of hearers—endeavouring to sum up the whole by a practical conclusion, ere we bid a final adieu to a passage on which for so many Sabbaths we have detained you.

The first class consists of those who care little about the matters of the soul and of eternity, who have never with any degree of seriousness entertained the question, who have been acting all along, not on the computation of those elements into which sin and salvation, and death and immortality enter—but have just lived and are continuing to live, as if the visible theatre which surrounds them were their all, and the platform of mortality whereon they walk, and underneath the surface of which they see acquaintances sinking and disappearing every day, were to hold them up and that firmly and prosperously for ever. We are sure we speak to their experience when we say, that all they mind is earthly things, and that their conversation is not in heaven, that joy in God through Jesus Christ is a feeling which they never had, and of which they have no comprehension; that the ecstasies of those who are so inspired and so actuated are beyond the range of their sympathy and understanding altogether. And give them a warm habitation in time, and stock it well with this world's comforts and accommodations, and surround them with a thriving circle of relations and a merry companionship, and let the animating game of a well-doing business abroad be varied by the flow of kindness and the songs of festivity at home—and they would have no objection, if thus compassed about and thus upholden, to be done with God and done with eternity for ever. When the preacher tries to demonstrate the utter wofulness and worthlessness of their spiritual condition, we know what the kind of question is with which they are prepared to assail him. We pay our debts; we can lift an open and unabashed visage in society; we follow the occasional impulses of a compassionate feeling towards the necessitous; we love our children; there is nothing monstrous about us, possessed as we are of all the instincts of humanity, and maintaining the full average of its equities and its decencies and its kindnesses: what then is the charge on which you would stamp a sort of moral hideousness upon our characters, and on which you pronounce against us the awful doom of an angry God and an

undone eternity?' The charge is that you joy in the creature, and not at all in the Creator; and to verify the doom, we have only to read in your hearing the future history of this world, in as far as it is made known to us by experience and revelation. That scene on which you have fastened your affections so closely that you cannot tear them away from it, will soon be torn away from you; and this world, on whose fair surface it is that sense and time have spread out their bewitching allurements, and decked them forth in colours of fascination, will soon be broken up; and your hold, as well as that of all our species on the present system of things, with all its pleasures and all its interests, will be everlastingly dissolved. It is then that God will step in between your soul and those creatures after which it has ever longed, but which are now swept away; and had your joy been in Him, then the heaven where He dwells would have been your fit because your joyful habitation. But as the tree falleth so it lies; and you rise from the grave with the taste, and the character, and the feelings which you had when you breathed your last upon your deathbed; and so all that is in your heart, carrying upon it a recoil from Him with whom alone you have to do, will meet with nothing there but that which must give dread and disturbance to your carnal affections; and these affections will wander in vain for the objects which solaced them upon earth. This intermediate place between heaven and hell will no longer be found; and the unhappy exile from the one will meet with the other alternative as his portion for evermore. It is thus that he who soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption. The materials of his gratification will be withheld, and the sordid appetite remain unsated and restless and ever pursuing him throughout all eternity: And whatever the outward inflictions may be which a God of vengeance will lay upon him—there will in the heats and the passions and the disappointed feelings of his own unregenerate bosom be element enough to constitute a worm within that cannot die, and a fire within that never can be quenched.

This may perhaps convince the first class of hearers of their exceeding distance from a right habit of soul for death and the eternity beyond it, and give them some understanding of the greatness of that transition which there is from the carnal to the spiritual; and bring even their own experience to testify for this announcement of the Bible, that unless they are born again they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. And it may lead some

such to bestir themselves, and to beat as it were upon the confines of that spiritual region the occupiers of which have a taste for God and so a foretaste of heaven in their souls; and many a weary struggle may they make after this regeneration, and perhaps—baffled in all their attempts—have the same distaste for God and godliness as ever. For how can that which is bitter become sweet unto me? How can this religion which is a weariness become a delight? How can I attain a relish and a capacity for its spiritual exercises? or share in a joy which I have never yet felt, and which certainly no method of compulsion can establish within me?

Now this leads us to a second class of hearers, who, instead of being careless, are making the interest of their soul a topic of great care and great cogitation; who have recourse to active measures in the prosecution of this interest, and are all alive to the great object of being right with God. It is indeed a most natural forth-setting of the whole man on such an occasion, to proceed on the principle of 'work and win;' and thus do they strive to establish a righteousness of their own, and by much labour to lay up a claim for wages on the day of reckoning; and in so labouring they just feel as an ordinary workman does. It is not his work that gives him pleasure; it is only the receipt of his wages that gives him pleasure. He has no rejoicing in his master or in his service. His only rejoicing is in the reward that he is to get from him, and which is distinct from his service. And in like manner is there many a seeker after life eternal toiling with all his might, in the spirit of bondage and of much carefulness, who has no joy in God—satisfied if he can escape hell and reach the undefined blessedness of heaven, but who does not reflect that it is altogether essential to this blessedness to have such a taste for the Divine character as to be glad in the contemplation of it—to have such a liking for the Divine life as that the life itself, with the necessary pleasure annexed to it, shall be reward enough for him—to have such a delight in the Being who made him that he counts himself rich in the simple possession of His friendship, and in the breathings of a heart that glows with regard and gratitude to the person of the Divinity. Without this, all he can do is but the bodily exercise that profiteth little; and that, instead of heightening his affection for God, may only exasperate the impatience and aggravate the weariness and distaste that he feels in his service. And the question recurs—how shall he be translated into this right spiri-

tual temperament? It is not by the laboriousness of the service that he will ever work himself into the habit of rejoicing in that master who appoints the service, and yet without the rejoicing there is no adaptation of the soul for paradise—no kindred quality with the atmosphere of the upper regions—none of that cordial delight in God which gives to heaven all its freeness and all its felicity—and, with all the drudgeries of outward obedience, no growing meetness whatever for the inheritance of the saints in light.

Now, what is the sum and the practical conclusion of this whole matter? We trust you all perceive how it leaves you no other alternative than that of just shutting you up unto the faith. There is a high ground of spiritual affection, and of joy in God, and of celestial delight in the sense of His presence and fellowship, to which you would like to be elevated. But you see nothing between you and that lofty region, saving a range of precipice that you cannot scale, and against which you vainly wreak all the native energies that belong to you. Let one door hitherto unobserved be pointed out, open to all who knock at it, and through which an easy and before unseen ascent conducts you to the light and purity and enjoyment of those upper regions after which you aspire; and what other practical effect should all the obstacles and impossibilities you have before encountered have upon you, than just to guide your footsteps to the alone way of access that is at all practicable? And this is just the conclusion you should come to on the matter under consideration. Strive as painfully as you may to work out a righteousness of your own, yet you will ever work among stumbling blocks, and peace will be at as great a distance from you as ever; and so far from joy in God being attained by such a process, it is far the likeliest way of accumulating upon your souls a distaste both for Him and for His service; and in these circumstances we know of nothing through which to insure your translation to this desirable habit of the soul, save the open door of Christ's mediatorship. It has been objected to the economy of the gospel that it exacts from its disciples an unnatural and unattainable elevation of character, and this is a most likely objection to proceed from him who looks at this economy with half an eye. The very same people may also, on looking at another side of this dispensation, be heard to object to the freeness of the gospel—to the immediate way in which any sinner may strike, even now, an act of reconciliation with the God whom

he has offended ; to the method of his justification by faith, and not by the works of the law ; and, in a word, to the whole character of its ministrations, by which it is reduced to a matter of giving upon the one side, and of confident receiving and relying upon the other. Now the two parts which are thus objected to singly, are those which give consistent support and stability to each other. It is just by faith, and in no other possible way, that you enter upon peace and hope and love and joy. It is just through Jesus Christ—not by working for the atonement, but simply by receiving the atonement—that you are translated into this desirable habit of the soul. It is just the freeness of the gospel which conducts its disciples to all the peculiar affections of the gospel. If you remain on the ground of legality—where ‘work and win’ is the order of the day—you never will win the length of firmly confiding in God as your friend, or of rejoicing in Him as the life and the dearest treasure of your existence. It is only by walking in that open way of access to which you are invited, and proceeding on the words of Christ, that “by him if any man enter in he shall be saved,” and laying hold of that covenant of peace on which He is desirous that all of you should lay a full and a sure reliance ; it is only thus that the tastes and affections of the heart will be led freely out to the God who thus calls and thus manifests Himself. Let us therefore sound in your hearing the invitations of the gospel, and make it known to you that your only chance of being translated into that angelic love of God and joy in Him which obtains in paradise, is simply by believing in their honesty, and trusting and triumphing and hoping and rejoicing accordingly. You can never be too sure of God’s truth. You can never be too sure of the saving efficacy of the blood of His Son. You can never be too sure of your having received such an abundance of grace as will exceed the measure of all your abounding iniquities. You can never be too sure of the faithfulness and infinite compassion of your Creator who is in heaven ; and the more you cherish all this sureness, the more will you rejoice in Him the shield of whose protection is over you, and the arms of whose everlasting love are round about you. This sureness is, in fact, the high road to all that enlargement of sacred and spiritual delight which in every other way is totally inaccessible. And we are not afraid of spoiling you into indolence by all this proclamation, or of lulling you by it into a habit of remissness in the exertions of duty, or of gendering a deceitful Anti-

nomianism in your hearts, or of turning any one of you into the disgusting spectacle of one who can talk of peace with God, while purity and principle and real piety are utter strangers to his unregenerated bosom. It is this freeness, and this in fact alone, which will make new creatures of you ; which will usher the love of God into your hearts ; which will bring down the Holy Ghost upon you from heaven ; which will inspire a taste for spiritual delights that you never before felt ; and furnish motive and impulse and affection for bearing you onward in the way of active and persevering duty, on the career of moral and spiritual excellence.

LECTURE XXIII.

ROMANS V. 12-21.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

ERE we proceed to the detailed explanation of these verses, it may be right to premise a few general remarks on the way in which sin found entrance into our world; on the precise doctrinal amount of our informations from Scripture relative to this subject; and on the degree in which these informations are met by the experience of man, and the natural sense that is in his bosom respecting guilt or demerit and condemnation.

We do feel this to be an enterprise of some difficulty and magnitude, and we fear a little too unwieldy for its being brought to a satisfying termination within the limits of one address. It seems, however, a suitable introduction to the task of expounding the passage that is now before us; and however formidable the attempt of grappling with a doctrine so mysterious to some and so repulsive to others as that of original sin—we do think it right frankly to state to you all that we think and all that we know about it.

This doctrine, then, may be regarded in two different aspects—first, as it respects the disposition to sin, and secondly, as it respects the guilt of sin. These two particulars, you will ob-

serve, are distinct from one another. To say that man has a tendency by nature to run into the commission of sin, is to say one thing—to say that by nature he is in a state of guilt or condemnation, is to say another. The act of sin is distinct from the punishment of sin. The disposition to it is a thing separate and apart from the desert of it. The corruption of human nature means its tendency to sin. The guilt of them who wear that nature, means their evil desert on account of sin; and for which, when reckoned with, a penal sentence may justly be laid upon them. The one is a matter of fact which may be affirmed in the word of God; but which may also be verified by the experience of man. The other is a matter of principle, which while it may be affirmed in Scripture, may also be taken cognisance of by the moral sense that resides and operates in the human bosom.

Now as to the fact of the sinful disposition in the nature of man, it can only be gathered—either from the sinful doings that appear in the history of man, or from the sinful desires, to the existence of which in his own heart he has access by the light of consciousness, and in the hearts of others by the light of their testimony. Even though we had outward exhibition alone, we often have enough to infer and ascertain the inward tendency. We do not need to dig into a spring to ascertain the quality of its water, but merely to examine the quality of the stream which flows from it. We have no access—either by our own consciousness or by their communications—to the hearts of the inferior animals, and yet we can pronounce with the utmost confidence—from their doings and their doings alone—on the characteristic disposition which belongs to each of them; and so we talk of the faithfulness of the dog, and the ferocity of the tiger, and the gentleness of the dove—ascribing to each a prior tendency of nature, from which there emanates the style of action that stands visibly forth in their outward histories.

Now this may lead us to understand in part what is meant by the term 'original,' as applied to the doctrine now under consideration. It is quite a current mode of expression, when one says that there is an original ferocity in the tiger. It means that, as the fountain on the hill-side is formed and filled up before it sends forth the rills which proceed from it—so a ferocious quality of nature exists in the tiger before it vents itself forth in deeds of ferocity. And it is a quality not induced upon the animal by education; for, however left to themselves, each of them

evinces it. Neither is it the fruit of any harsh or provoking treatment to which it is exposed; for under every variety of treatment, or with no treatment at all, still it is the unfailing disposition of each individual belonging to the tribe. As little can it be ascribed to climate or to accident, or to anything posterior to the formation of the animal itself; for under all these differences we still behold the forth-putting of that characteristic fierceness that we are now speaking of. It may well be called original; for it would appear, both from the universality of this attribute and from the unconquerable strength of it, that it belongs essentially to the creature; that from the very way in which it is put together at the first, from the very way in which the elements of its constitution are compounded, this fierce and fiery disposition is made to evolve itself. And just as the structure of the stomach necessarily gives rise to sensations of hunger, and hunger impels to deeds of voraciousness—so in the original frame of the animal may there be an inherent temper of cruelty, which, ere it proceeds to devour a victim, leads it with savage delight to aggravate and prolong his sufferings.

There is no difficulty here in understanding what is meant by the difference between the original and the actual. Could the cruelties of a tiger be denominated sins, then would all the cruelties that were indeed inflicted by it on the various animals which it had seized during the course of its whole life be the actual sins of its history in the world. It is evident that these might vary in number and in circumstances with different individuals of the same tribe, and yet both of them have the same strength of native disposition towards cruelty. Each in this case has an original tendency to sinning—a tendency that cometh direct out of the very frame and composition of the animal; so that if the fountain can be regarded separately from the rivulet—if the kind of tree can be considered as one thing, and the kind of fruit which it bears be considered as another—if a quality of inward temper be a thing distinct from and antecedent to the ebullitions of it in deed and in performance, and this quality be diffused through a whole species, and as much born with each of its individuals as is the shape or are the members of its body, then may there be a real and philosophical foundation for that distinction between original and actual sin which has been so much resisted by the disciples of our modern literature, and so much decried as the fiction of a barbarous theology.

It is thus that we verify by experience the doctrine of original sin. Should it be found true of every man that he is actually a sinner—should this hold unexceptedly true with each individual of the human family—if in every country of the world, and in every age of the world's history, all who had grown old enough to be capable of showing themselves were transgressors against the law of God—and if among all the accidents and varieties of condition to which humanity is liable, each member of humanity still betook himself to his own wayward deviations from the rule of right, then he sins, not because of the mere perversity of his education—not solely because of the peculiar excitements to evil that have crossed his path—not only because of the noxious atmosphere he breathes, or the vitiating example that is on every side of him, but he sins purely in virtue of his being a man. There is something in the very make and mechanism of his nature which causes him to be a sinner—a moral virus infused into the first formation of each individual who is now born into our world. The innate and original disposition of man to sin is just as firmly established by the sinful doings of all and each of the species, as the innate ferocity of the tiger is by the way in which this quality breaks forth into actual exemplification in each individual of the tribe. If each man is a sinner, it is because of a pervading tendency to sin that so taints and overspreads the whole nature as to be present with every separate portion of it. And to assert the doctrine of original sin in these circumstances is to do no more than to assert the reigning quality of any species, whether in the animal or the vegetable kingdom. It is to do no more than to affirm the ferocious nature of the tiger, or the odorous nature of the rose, or the poisonous nature of the foxglove. It is to reduce that which is true of every single specimen of our nature into a general expression that we make applicable to the whole nature. And to talk of the original sin of our species—thereby intending to signify the existence of a prior and universal disposition to sin—is just as warrantable as to affirm the most certain laws, or the soundest classifications in Natural History.

Could another planet offer to our notice another family of rational beings, in form and in features and in faculties like our own; did we see there the same accommodations which we occupy, and the same scenery that enriches our globe, with only this difference between the two tribes which each peopled its own world, that whereas in every single instance the former were all

actually sinners, the latter were all actually righteous—who would not infer an original difference of constitution from this universal difference of conduct? Who would not infer a something that distinguished the nature of the one species from the nature of the other—the virulence of an evil principle spread over the whole of that race in every single member of which you saw the outbreakings of evil; and an exemption from this deleterious principle in that race in no one member of which you could notice a single deviation from the law of uprightness? Now this evil principle is neither more nor less than original sin, and actual sin is but the produce of it. And we have nothing to do but to ascertain that actual sin is universal, in order to infer the original sin of mankind—or such an unexcepted proneness of desire to sin in the human constitution, that no individual who wears that constitution is ever found in deed to abstain from it.

When one sees a delight in cruelty on the part of every individual among a particular tribe of animals—who would ever hesitate to affirm that cruelty was the native and universal characteristic of the tribe—that this entered into the primary composition of that kind of living creature, insomuch that it may be safely predicted of every future specimen which shall be brought into the world, that this hateful quality will be found to adhere to it? By ascribing to the whole species an original propensity to cruelty, you are only stating a general fact by a general expression. And you do no more when you ascribe to our species an original propensity to sin—inferring from the general fact, that all men have sinned, such a constitutional tendency to evil as makes you confidently aver, not merely of the past but also of all the future individuals of our race—that all men will sin. This is the doctrine of original sin, in as far as it affirms the existence of a prior tendency to sin among all the members of the great family of mankind—a doctrine affirmed in the Bible, and confirmed by human experience, if the fact is made out that there is not a man in our world who liveth and sinneth not.

There is not enough, it may be thought, of evidence for this fact in the record of those more glaring enormities which give to the general history of the world so broad an aspect of wicked and unprincipled violence. It is all true, that in the conspicuous movement of nations justice is often thrown aside, and robbery spreads its cruel excesses over the families of a land,

and revenge satiates her thirst in the blood of provinces ; so that man, when let loose from the restraints of earthly law, proves how slender a hold the law of God has on his heart, or the law of revelation upon his conscience. Still the actors in the great national drama of the world are comparatively few ; and though satisfied from the style of their performances that many more would just feel alike and do alike in the same circumstances—there is yet room for affirming, that in the unseen privacies of social and domestic life there may arise many a beauteous specimen of unstained worth and unblemished piety ; and that among the descendants of our arraigned species some are to be found who pass a guileless and a perfect life in this world, and in whose characters even the Judge who sitteth above cannot detect a single flaw upon which to found their exclusion from the sinless abodes of Paradise. It is quite impossible, you will perceive, to meet this affirmation by successively passing all the individuals of our race before you, and pointing to the eye of your observation the actual iniquity of the heart or life which proves their relationship as the corrupt members of a corrupt family. But there is another way of meeting it. You cannot make all men manifest to each man, but you may make each man manifest to himself. You may make an appeal to his own conscience, and put him to his defence, if he is able for it, against the imputation that he too is a sinner. In defect of evidence for this upon his outward history, you may accompany him to that place where the emanating fountain of sin is situated. You may enter along with him into the recesses of his own heart, and there detect the unfailing preference that is given by it to its own will—the constant tendency it has to impel its possessor to walk in his own way—the slight and rarely occasional hold that the authority of God has over it—its almost utter emptiness of desire towards Him, insomuch that His law is dethroned from its habitual ascendancy, and the sense of Him is banished from his habitual recollections. He may spurn at injustice, and blush at indelicacy, and recoil from open profanation, and weep at human suffering ; and yet, withal, he may forget and disown God. Not one hour of his life, from one end to the other of it, may have been filled with any one business which God had set him to, just as a master sets his servant to a task. He may have been some hours at church—but custom set him to it ; or he may have been officiating as long in the service of a fellow-creature—but native humanity set him to it ; or he may labour

all week long for the subsistence of his family—but instinctive affection set him to it; or he may engage in many a right and useful enterprise—but a feeling of propriety, or a constitutional love of employment, or a tenderness for his own reputation set him to it. We dispute not, as we have often told you, the power and the reality of many principles in the heart of man most amiable in their character, most salutary in their operation, but which work at the same time their whole influence upon his conduct without the reverence and without the recognition of God. It is this which can be fastened, we affirm, on every son and daughter of Adam. It is that the Being who made us is unminded by us. It is that the element of human nature is an element of ungodliness. It is that though the wayward heart of man goes forth by many different ways to the object it is most set upon, yet in no one of them is its habitual tendency heavenward or Godward. From such a fountain innumerable are the streams of disobedience which will issue; and though many of them may not be so deeply tinged with the hue of disobedience as others, yet still in the fountain itself there is the principle of independence upon God, of unconcern about God. Put our planet with its rational inhabitants by the side of another where all felt the same delight in God that angels feel, and in every movement they made caught their impulse from a full sense of God as the bidder of it; and though each business on which they set out was a task put into their hands, gave their intense prosecution to it—not with the feeling of its being a drudgery, but with a feeling of delight; let a difference so palpable between the two human generations of the two worlds be exhibited—as that in the one God is out of the eye and out of the remembrance of His creatures, and in the other God is ever felt to be present, and the will of all whom He has there made is the will of Him who made them—are you to say of such a difference that it has no cause? Is it merely a fortuitous thing that all without exception in the one place should walk in the counsel of their own ungodly hearts, and in the other should walk as the devoted subjects of a Divine and Almighty Sovereign? Are we to be so unphilosophical as to affirm that such a distinction as this is but a random contingency which can be traced to no origin, and is referable to no principle whatever? Must there not be a something in the original make and constitution of the two families to account for such a total and unexcepted diversity as has been noticed by the eye of observation? Where is the

error of saying that there is a prior corrupt tendency in the one world which does not exist in the other? And so far have we explained what is meant by the original sin that is charged upon mankind, when we affirmed it to be that constitutional proneness to evil in virtue of which all men are sinners.

We are quite aware that the principle on which we would convince the whole world of sin is but faintly recognised, and therefore feebly felt, by many of the most eloquent expounders of human virtue; that indignant as they are against the vices which bear injuriously upon themselves, they have no sense of the injury done to God by the disregard and the forgetfulness of His own creatures; that they would tolerate all the impiety there is in the world, if there was only force enough in the moral vehemence of their own powerful and pathetic appeals to school away all its cruelty and selfishness and fraud. And therefore it is that we hold it indeed a most valid testimony in behalf of our doctrine, when those very men who undertake to tutor the species in virtue apart from godliness and apart from the methodism of the gospel, are rendered heartless by disappointment and take revenge upon their disciples by pouring forth the effusions of bitterest misanthropy against them. It would look as if even on their own ground the tenet of original sin might find enough of argument and countenance to make it respectable. Rousseau was one of those to whom we allude. He may be regarded as having in effect abjured Christianity, and betaken himself to the enterprise of humanizing the world on other principles; and from the bower of romance and sensibility did he send forth the lessons that were to recall our wandering race to the primitive innocence from which art and science and society had seduced them, and year after year did he ply all Europe with the spells of a most magical and captivating eloquence. Nor were there wanting many admirers who worshipped him while he lived, and who when he died went like devotees on a pilgrimage to his tomb; and they too had the fondness to imagine that the conceptions of his wondrous mind were the germs of a great moral revolution that was awaiting our species. But the ill-fated Rousseau lived long enough himself to mourn over the vanity of his own beauteous speculations, and was heard to curse the very nature he had so long idolized; and instead of humanity being capable of being raised to the elevation of a godlike virtue, he himself pronounced of humanity that it was deeply tainted with some sore

and irrecoverable disease. And it is indeed a striking attestation from him to the depravity of our race, that ere he ended his career he became sick of that very world which he had vainly tried to regenerate—renouncing all brotherhood with his own species, and loudly proclaiming to all his fellows how much he hated and execrated and abjured them.

What Rousseau is in prose, Lord Byron is in poetry; only he never aimed to better a world of which he seldom spoke but in the deep and bitter derision of a heart that utterly despised it—not because of its ungodliness, for it is not this which calls forth the vindictiveness of his most appalling abjurations,—but it is obviously his feeling of humanity, that its whole heart is sick and its whole head is sore, that some virus of deep and deadly infusion pervades the whole extent of it, and never is he more in his own favourite element than when giving back to the world from his own pages the reflected image of that guilt which troubles and deforms it. One should have liked to see a mind so powerful as his led to that secret of this world's depravity which is only revealed unto babes, while hid in a veil of apparent mysticism from the wise and the prudent. And yet even as it is does he—in the wild and frenzied career of his own imagination—catch a passing glimpse of the truth that he had not yet apprehended.

“ Our life is a false nature—’tis not in
The harmony of things—this hard decree,
This unradicable taint of sin,
This boundless Upas, this all-blasting tree,
Whose root is earth, whose leaves and branches be
The skies, which rain their plagues on man like dew,
Disease, death, bondage, all the woes we see,
And even the woes we see not, which throb through
The immedicable soul, with heart-aches ever new.”

It has turned out as we apprehended. We have said enough for one address, and yet we have not been able to pass away from the first branch of the subject of original sin—even the sinful tendency which exists as a native and constitutional attribute of our species, and has been denominated the corruption of our species. We cannot at present afford so much as one sentence on the other branch of the subject, which is original sin in respect of the guilt of it; and under which we may have to advance a few remarks, for elucidating what has been termed the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity. It is evident that

the two topics—the existence of original sin and the guilt of it—are distinct from one another; and they lead to distinct practical consequences. The only one we shall urge upon you just now is, that however much poetry and philosophy and eloquence may have failed in their attempts to extirpate the moral disorders of our world—this is the very enterprise which the gospel of Jesus Christ has embarked upon, and on the success of which, in the case of all who truly submit to its lessons, it has ventured the whole credit of its divinity and its truth. We mistake Christianity if we think that it only provides an expiation to do away the guilt of our original depravity; it provides a regenerating influence to do away its existence. It does something more than demonstrate the evil malady of our nature; it will not be satisfied with anything short of destroying it. For this purpose it brings a new and a powerful element into living play with the original elements of our constitution; and with these it sustains a combat that may well be denominated a war of extermination. The moralists of our age, whether in lessons from the academic chair or by the insinuating address of fiction and poetry—while they try to mend and to embellish human life, have never struck one effective blow at that ungodliness of the heart which is the germ of all the distempers in human society. It is against this that the gospel aims its decisive thrust, as at the very seed and principle of the mischief. It combats the disease in its original elements; and instead of idly attempting to intercept or turn aside the stream of this sore corruption, it makes head against that fortress where the emanating fountain of the distemper lies. For this purpose, the truths which it reveals, and the weapons which it employs, and the expedients which it puts into operation—nay, the very terms of that vocabulary which it uses, are almost strikingly contrasted both with the conceptions and the phraseology of general literature. There is nothing, there is positively nothing in that general literature—the professed object of which too is to moralize our species—about the blood of an everlasting covenant, or the path of reconciliation with God by an offered and appointed mediatorship, or the provision of a sanctifying Spirit, by which there is infused into our nature a counteracting virtue to all the sinfulness that abounds in it. We have already had proof of the utter impotency of all that has issued from the schools of sentiment and philosophy. Should not this shut us up at least to the experiment of this very peculiar gospel, which

offers to guide the world to a consummation that hitherto has been so very hopeless? Let each, at all events, try it for himself. Let each here present, whose conscience has responded to the charge of ungodliness, feel himself drawn to an expedient by which this most obstinate of all tendencies may at length be overcome. And for your encouragement at the outset let us announce to you, that this said gospel justifies the ungodly. Even now acceptance is offered to you. Even now reconciliation may be entered on, and that without waiting till the heart has given up its practical and deep-rooted atheism. The first act to which you are called is an act of agreement with the God whom you have so totally renounced in the habit and history of your past life. The blood of Christ, if you will only take heart and believe in it, washes away the guilt of all this sinfulness; and the promise that He gives to those who trust in Him is, that He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob—sealing those who believe with the Holy Spirit, and thus causing them to love and honour and serve the God from whom they were aforetime so widely and so wretchedly alienated.

LECTURE XXIV.

ROMANS V. 12-21.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

In our last discourse we attempted to show in how far the doctrine of the Bible, respecting the existence of a corrupt tendency in our race, met and was at one with human observation. This is clearly a question that may be brought to such a tribunal. Whether a sinful disposition exists and is universal among men is matter of experience as well as of divine revelation. That this corruption exists in the world is matter of experience. But how it entered into the world is altogether a matter of testimony. It is an historical fact, which must be exhibited to us in a credible record, ere we can come to the knowledge or the belief of it. We cannot confront it with anything that now passes before our eyes—it being a solitary event of great antiquity, and which has no proper evidence to rest upon save the informations of history.

'By one man,' says our text, 'sin entered into the world.' He came out pure and righteous from the hand of God; but Adam, after he had yielded to the temptation of the garden, was a changed man from Adam in his days of innocence in Paradise.

He gathered a different hue in consequence, and that hue was permanent; and while we are told that God made man at first after His own image, we are further told that the very first person who was born into the world, came to it in the image of his parent—not in the original, but in the transformed image, that is, with the whole of that tendency to sin which on the first act of sin was formed in the character of Adam, and was transmitted through him to all his posterity.

This is the simple statement; and we are not able to give the explanation. The first tree of a particular species may be conceived to have come from the Creator's hand with the property of bearing fruit of the sweetest taste and most exquisite flavour. A pestilential gust may have passed over it, and so changed its nature that all the fruit it was afterwards to bear should be sour and unsavoury. After this change, it may be conceived to have dropt its seeds or its acorns; and such may the virulence of the transformation have been, that all the future trees which are to be propagated from the parent stock, rise not in the original but transformed likeness of the tree from which they sprung. If this were credibly attested as a fact, we are certainly not prepared to resist it. We have no such acquaintance with the physiology of the vegetable world as to affirm, in the face of good historical testimony, that this is impossible; and as little are we entitled, from any acquaintance with the law of transmission from father to son in the department of animal and intelligent nature, to set ourselves in opposition to that Bible narrative by which we are given to understand that a moral blight came over the character of our great progenitor; and that, when so reduced and deteriorated in his better qualities, a race of descendants proceeded from him with that very taint of degeneracy that he had taken on; that the evil thus superinduced on the nature of the first man was transmitted to all the men whom he originated—who, of course, instead of being fruitful in righteousness, yielded in their lives the bitter produce of many actual transgressions, of much visible and abounding iniquity.

There is another fact announced to us in this passage, and that is the connexion between the corruption of our nature and its mortality. Sin brought death into the world; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. This brings out to view in another way the distinction that we have endeavoured to impress between actual and original sin. All have not sinned

after the similitude of Adam's transgression; and yet death reigneth equally over them. All have not sinned by a positive deed of disobedience. Infants have not thus sinned; and yet infants die. The death that they undergo is not the fruit of any actual iniquity of theirs, but of that moral virus which has descended from the common fountain of our species, and which taints and vilifies, and transmits the elements of decay and destructibleness among all the members of it. They have never done what is sinful; and yet they have that of sin in them which carries death in its train. And what is this but the corrupt tendency that we have all along insisted on, the original and constitutional aptitude that there is to sinning, in virtue of which we may compute, with all the firmness of certainty, that when the time of bringing forth cometh transgression is the fruit that they will bear—a disposition that only yet exists in embryo, but which will come out into deed and development so soon as powers and opportunities are expanded. The infant tiger has not yet performed one act of ferocity; but we are sure that all the rudiments of ferocity exist in its native constitution, and that the original principle of this quality, long before it has been unfolded into actual development, lurks in it from its birth, and only waits its growth and its maturity till it come out into exhibition. The tender sapling of the crab-tree has not yielded one sour apple; but we most certainly know that there is even from the minutest germ of its existence an organic necessity for its producing this kind of fruit, when time has conducted it onward to this period of its history. And in like manner, the infant of a week old has not broken one of the commandments; but well may we infer from the universality of sin in our species that should it rise to boyhood, there is that in its disposition now which will advance and ripen into disobedience then. And should the hand of death arrest it in its career, and by its preventing stroke snatch it away from the possibility of ever committing one action of iniquity, and it be asked, how it is that the connexion between sin and the suffering of death is exemplified in the fate of this poor innocent—we would reply, that though the mischief had not exploded in its history, yet the whole elements of the mischief lay slumbering in its heart; and though it could not be said to die because of actual transgression, yet it shared in the common calamity with the rest of the species, because with the rest of the species it had its full share of the original tendency to evil.

One knows not how soon it is that this tendency breaks forth into open exhibition. One never saw and hardly can conceive how a babe of unspotted descent would have proved from the first day which ushered it into being that it had no fellowship in that corrupt principle which taints from very infancy all the families of our earthly generation. In a very few years the difference would be palpable—even as the Saviour, both in boyhood and in manhood, stood distinguished from all the partakers of that nature whose sufferings He bore but whose sins He had no share in. We have a full record of His bright example when He reached the maturity of His human powers; but it must be matter of curiosity, and not of edification, that we have no record of His tone and habit and character in infancy. One would like if he could, to lift the veil which hangs over the experience of Mary, and to learn of her, who had the maternal care and guidance of the holy child Jesus, and to know what was the precise complexion of that moral dawn which preceded the pure and perfect effulgence that shone forth on the history of His riper years; and to be told how richly all her tenderness was repaid by smiles more lovely than ever before had played on the infant countenance—and in his hours of anguish by such a calm and unruffled serene, as not one cry of impatience and not one movement of fretfulness or wrath ever broke in upon. But it is vain to pry into the secret of that only sinless infancy which the world ever saw; and we have only to assure ourselves of all other children, that, helpless as they are in person, and dear to a parent's fondest regards from that very helplessness—the germ of depravity is already in their hearts. And whether or not we should put to the account of this the boisterous outcry of an infant, and the ever-recurring turmoil wherewith it clamours abroad all its desires and all its disappointments, and the constant exactions it makes of everything it sees in its own wayward appetite for indulgence, and its spurning impatience of all resistance and control—so as in fact to subordinate the whole household to its caprices, and be the little tyrant to whose brief but most effective authority the entire circle of relationship must bend—whether these be symptomatic or not of that disease wherewith humanity is infected in all its members, still we must admit that the disease is radically there; and however it may brood for a season, in a sort of ambiguous concealment, among the inscrutable and unrevealed mysteries of an infant's spirit, yet soon do the selfishness and the sensuality and the ungodliness

come out at length into such open declaration, as indeed to prove to every calm and philosophic observer of our nature, that one and all of us are born in sin, and all of us are shapen in iniquity.

You will be at no loss, then, to conceive the distinction between original and actual sin. The one is the tendency to sin in the constitution—the other is the outbreaking of that tendency in the conduct; and if sinful conduct be universal, we infer a sinful constitution to be universal also. And you will be as little at a loss to perceive how the original sin of every human creature is coeval with the first moment of his existence, and enters as much among the elements of his formation, as the tendency to bear a particular kind of fruit lies incorporated with the very acorn from which the tree has germinated. We know not whether upon the introduction of sin, the sentence of mortality was made to pass on the vegetable as well as on the animal creation; or whether, had we lived in an unfallen world, its plants, as well as its people would have been immortal. But such is in fact the organic structure of both that both are liable to dissolution; and whether they die ere the one has come forth with its fruit of palpable iniquity, and the other with its apple of discernible flavour—whether nipped in infancy or withered into final extinction after having passed through all the stages of growth and of decay—we never think of ascribing this sweeping and universal destruction to any other cause than to a universal something in the original frame of all the individuals that are subject to this sore fatality: And whether it be the grandfather bowed down under the weight of years or the babe of a week old that breathes his last, it is the same deadly virus that carries off them both—the poison of an accursed nature, that only needs the scope of opportunity for the development of all the plagues and all the perversities which belong to it.

We trust, then, that we may have made it clear to your apprehension how there exists in the human constitution from the very first a tendency to sin, and that this tendency has a forthcoming in sinful actions with every individual of our race who lives a few years in the world—just as the tendency in the crab-tree to produce sour apples has its forthcoming in the appearance of this very fruit after the time of bearing has arrived. The tendency in both has come down through a long series of intermediate parents, and may be traced in each to the tendency of one great progenitor, whether of the human or of the vegetable species. Thus far then have we got in our argument—even

that original sin, as it respects the inborn depravity of our race, is at one with the actual experience of mankind. And we should further proceed to show in how far original sin, as it respects not its actual existence in our frames, but as it respects the imputation of guilt to all who are under it, is at one with the moral sense of mankind. And then would we propose to finish all our preliminaries to the exposition of the passage before us, by replying to the invectives which have been founded upon this doctrine against the character of God. But we have already consumed too much of your time to enter at present on topics so unwieldy; and we shall therefore confine the remainder of the address to such practical enforcements as may be educed from the explanation that we have already attempted in your hearing.

The first consideration we shall address to you is, what a testimony it is to God's irreconcilable antipathy against sin that He has made death to follow invariably in its train—that because there is in these bodies of ours a tendency to moral evil these bodies must therefore be dissolved—that such is the blasting influence of this sore contagion as to wither and sicken every individual whom it touches, and be unto him the unfailing poison under the virulence of which he sooner or later must expire—that though it was by the narrow inlet of one temptation that sin found entrance into our world at the first, and was thence diffused as if by pestilence throughout the whole extent of our putrescent nature, yet widely as it has ranged abroad over the entire domain of humanity, and unsparingly as it has attacked every single member of it, it goes nowhere without carrying the curse of mortality along with it; and on account of this does each successive generation but moulder back again into the dust out of which it had arisen. It would seem that—as if to detach this leprosy from our constitution—the old materials of the old framework must be beaten into powder, and be made to pass through some purifying ordeal in the sepulchre. And it is indeed an impressive exhibition of the malignity of sin, to think that because of it, and of it alone, all nature is suffering violence—when we see death thus making its relentless sweep among all ages; and even before it be possible to evince sin in the conduct—as with the infant of a day old—yet it is enough that there be sin in the constitution, to bring this almost unconscious babe within the operation of a sentence which grants no reprieve, which knows no exception.

But secondly, this deep view of our disease, however much it may look an inapplicable speculation in the eyes of many, yet, if rightly improved, would lead in fact to a deep view of the remedy that was suited to it. The man who looks upon sin as a mere affair of accident or education may think, that by the putting forth a more strenuous determination against it—by bringing the energies of the inward will to bear upon the outward walk—he may suppress the moral evil at least of his own character, and achieve for himself an exemption and a victory. But the man who looks upon this sin as a constitutional taint fixed upon him from very infancy, and pervading all the recesses of his frame—who recognises the will itself to be corrupt, and that when it comes to be a question between God and His gifts it is only to the latter, and not at all to the former that he has any inclination—when he finds that the dark hue of an original and inborn sinfulness adheres to him, just as the spots do to the leopard and the tawny skin which no superficial operation can do away does to the Ethiopian—then, if he have any depth of reflection, he will conclude that in such circumstances he is really not warranted to turn away from that remedy which the gospel proposes as the grand specific for all our moral and all our spiritual disorders. The whole range of human power and human experience supplies him with nothing that can purge away the foul inveteracy wherewith his nature is stained; and he just follows in the legitimate track of a rightly exercised and rightly discerning judgment when he is shut up unto the faith. More particularly will such a man hold it to be indeed worthy of all acceptance, when he reads of a new birth being indispensable; nor will he recoil, as many do with sensitive dislike, from the doctrine of regeneration; nor will he look upon it in any other light than as the prescription of a wise physician who has probed the patient's disease to the bottom, and finds it to be indeed engrained among the first elements of the constitution of our nature. He will rather do homage to the penetration of this physician when he affirms that the fruit is corrupt because the tree is corrupt, and that an operation must be gone through, far more radical than any which lies within the compass of unaided humanity, that a new creation must issue forth from Him who holds the creative faculty altogether in His own hands; that ere the fruit can be made good, the tree must be made good. And thus it is that the man who looks to the fall in all its consequences, and to the transmitted depravity of nature

running throughout all the men of all the generations of our world, and to the utter impossibility of this sore corruption being dislodged by the determining energy of man's will, because the corruption has in fact got hold of the will itself, and determines it only to evil and that continually—such a man no longer marvels with the incredulity of Nicodemus, when he is told that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, and that unless he is born again and born of the Spirit he never can see that kingdom.

Lastly, it may be replied, What is to be done? To believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is the thing that is to be done. This is the specific, and that not for guilt merely, but also for corruption. You may think it too simple an affair for landing you in so mighty a consummation. Make it a more strenuous affair by putting your own puny efforts to the stretch of their uttermost activity, and you never will succeed. The Syrian thought it too simple an affair when asked to bathe in the waters of Jordan for his leprosy; nevertheless he did it—and his leprosy left him. You will see God in a new light if you look to Him as reflected from the glass of the offered mediatorship. If we could turn you from the hatred of God to the love of Him, this would be to regenerate you; and we ask you to look unto God as God in Christ reconciling the world, and the change from hatred to love is accomplished. Those dark clouds which have hitherto lowered upon you from the pavilion of His lofty residence, will forthwith be dissipated. You will then see that all-majestic as He is, and awfully as that majesty has been illustrated by the account that has been made for sin, yet there is a mercy too, which shines forth in the midst of His other attributes, and rejoices over them. You will love the God who first loved you; and that unfailing promise, that He who gave His own Son will also freely give us all things, shall so invite the prayers and the dependence of every believing soul, that the Spirit given to those who ask it will be given unto him; and he, gradually formed after the lost image of the Godhead, will become a new creature—meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, meet for the enjoyment of that Paradise where sin and sorrow and suffering are unknown.

We have all along, upon this subject, proceeded on the constitutional tendency that there is to sin in our nature being one thing, and the guilt chargeable upon us for having such a ten-

dency being another. The question, how far a native and original depravity exists among mankind, is one thing. The question, how mankind are justly liable to be reckoned with, or to be dealt with as responsible and worthy of punishment for having such a tendency, is another. We have already spoken abundantly to the fact of the actual depravity—announced to us most explicitly in the Bible, and confirmed to us most entirely and universally by personal observation. In so far as the doctrine of original sin affirms a native disposition to sin, and a disposition so strong in all as that all are sinners—in so far as the doctrine at one with experience. But in so far as the doctrine affirms that there is a blame or a demerit rightly attachable to man for having such a disposition, or that he is to be held a guilty and condemned creature on account of it—this is a question referable not to the experience of man but to the moral sense of man. The experience of man takes cognisance of the question whether such a thing is, and thus applicable to the question whether a depraved tendency to moral evil is or is not in the human constitution. The moral sense of man takes cognisance of the question whether such a thing ought to be, and is therefore applicable to the question whether man ought to be held and dealt with as a criminal on account of a tendency which came unbidden by him into the world—which entered among the first elements of his constitution, without ever consulting him or asking any leave from him upon the subject—which he derived, not by choice but by inheritance, and over which he had no more control than he had over the properties of the air which he breathed, or the milk which nourished him. We feel that we are touching on the borders of a very profound, and what to most is a very unfathomable speculation; and we would not have ventured so far, had we not both conceived it due to scriptural truth, which we think ought to be firmly and fearlessly expounded up to the full amount of all that is revealed to us—and had we not furthermore conceived the whole exposure of our disease and misery to have a deciding influence on him who still hesitates about the remedy of the gospel—not very sure, perhaps, whether he is altogether welcome to the use of it; not very sure, perhaps, whether he altogether stands in urgent and indispensable need of it.

To determine the question, then, in how far the attaching of demerit to a sinful nature that man has brought with him into the world is agreeable to the moral sense of mankind—we should

inquire how much or how little man requires to have within his view, ere his moral sense shall pronounce on the character either of any act or of any disposition that is submitted to his notice. One may see a dagger projected from behind a curtain, and in the firm grasp of a human hand, and directed with sure and deadly aim against the bosom of an unconscious sleeper; and seeing no more, he would infer of the individual who held this mortal weapon that he was an assassin, and that he deserved the death of an assassin. Had he seen all, he might have seen that this seeming agent of the murder which had just been perpetrated, was in fact a struggling and overpowered victim in the hands of others—that he, the friend of the deceased, was pitched upon in the spirit of diabolic cruelty as the unwilling instrument of the deed which he abhorred—that for this purpose the fatal knife was clasped or fastened to his hand, and his voice stifled by violence—that he was borne in deepest silence to the spot by the strength of others; and that there was he, in most revolting agony of heart, compelled to thrust forward his passive or rather his resisting arm, and immediately to strike the exterminating blow into the bosom of a much-loved companion. Who does not see that the moral sense, when these new circumstances come into view, would instantly amend or rather reverse, and that totally, the former decision which it had passed upon the subject—that he whom it deemed the murderer and chargeable with all the guilt of so foul an atrocity it would most readily absolve from all the blame and all the condemnation—that it would transfer the charge to those who were behind him, and pronounce them to be the murderers—that he who held the dagger and performed the deed was innocent of all its turpitude, because the victim of a necessity which he could not help, and against which he had wrought and wrestled in vain? and thus, ere it passes such a sentence as it feels to be righteous, must it look not merely to the act but to the intention, not merely to the work of the hand but to the will of the heart which prompted it.

Now if we have any right consciousness of our own moral feelings, or any right observation of the moral feelings of others, the mind of man, in order to be determined as to the moral character of any act that is submitted to its notice, needs to know what the intention was that originated the act, but needs no more. It makes no inquiry as to what that was which originated the intention. Give it simply to understand that such is

the intention of a man who is not under derangement, and therefore knows what he is purposing and what he is doing, and then without looking farther the moral sense comes at once to its summary estimate of the moral character of that which is under contemplation. Let us see a man who has done a murderous act in the circumstances which we have just now specified, and we do not look upon him as a criminal, because we find that the act originated in the will of others and against his own will. Let us see a man who has done a murderous act, and was instigated thereto by a murderous disposition, and we cannot help looking upon him as a criminal—finding as we do that the act originated in his own will. An act against the will indicates no demerit on the part of him who performed it; but an act with the will gives us the full impression of demerit. The philosopher may amuse himself with the ulterior query, What was it that originated the will? but the peasant has no metaphysics and no speculation for entertaining such a topic; and yet he has just as fresh and just as enlightened a sense of the demerit of a bad action coming from a bad intention as has the most curious and contemplative inquirer—whose restless appetite is ever carrying him upward among the remote and hidden principles of the phenomena that are around him. To get a right moral estimate of any given act, we must carry our view up from the act of the hand to the disposition of the heart; but we need to carry it up no farther. The moment that the disposition is seen the moral sense is correspondingly affected, and rests its whole estimation, whether of merit or of demerit, not on the anterior cause which gave origin to the disposition, but on the character which it now bears, or the aspect under which it is now seen and contemplated before you.

How the disposition got there is not the question which the moral sense of man, when he is unvitiated by a taste for speculation, takes any concern in. It is enough for the moral sense that the disposition is there. One may conceive, with the Manicheans of old, two eternal Beings—one of whom was essentially wicked and malignant and impure, and the other of whom was essentially good and upright and compassionate and holy from everlasting. We could not tell how these opposite dispositions got there, for there they behaved to be from the unfathomable depths of the eternity that is behind us—yet that would not hinder us from regarding the one as an object of moral hatefulness and dislike, and the other as an object of moral esteem and

moral approbation. It is enough that the dispositions exist ; and it matters not how they originated, or if ever they had an origin at all. And, in like manner, give us two human individuals—one of whom is revengeful and dishonest and profligate and sensual, and the other of whom is kind and generous and honourable and godly—our moral sense, on the simple exhibition of these two characters, leads us to regard the one as blamable and the other as praiseworthy—the one as rightly the object of condemnation and punishment, and the other as rightly the object of approval and reward. And in so doing, it does not look so far back as to the primary or originating cause of the distinction that obtains between these two characters ; it looks as far back as to reach its contemplation from the act of the outer man to the disposition of the inner man ; but there it stops. Give to its view a wrong act originating in a wrong intention ; and it asks no more to make up its estimate of the criminality of what has been offered to its notice. It troubles not itself with the metaphysics of prior and originating causes ; and however the deed in question may have originated, let it simply have emanated from a concurring disposition on the part of him who has performed it, and be a deed of wickedness—then does it conclude that the man has done wickedly and that he should be dealt with accordingly.

We know very well what it is that stumbles so readily the speculative inquirer into this mystery. He thinks that a man born with a sinful disposition is born with the necessity of sinning, and that to be under such a necessity exempts him from all blame, and all imputation of guiltiness in having sinned. But so long as he is under this feeling, he is in fact, though not very conscious of the delusion, confounding two things which are distinct the one from the other. He is confounding the necessity that is against the will with the necessity that is with the will. The man who struggled against the external force that compelled him to thrust a dagger into the bosom of his friend, was operated upon by a necessity that was against his will ; and you exempt him from all charge of criminality in the matter. But the man who does the very same thing at the spontaneous bidding of his own heart—whose will prompted him to the act, and who gave his consent and his choice to this deed of enormity—this is the man whom you irresistibly condemn, and you irresistibly recoil from. With such a disposition as he had, it was perhaps unavoidable ; but the very

having of such a disposition makes him in your eye a monster of moral deformity. If there was a kind of necessity here, it was a necessity of an essentially different sort from the one we have just now specified, and ought therefore not to be confounded with it. It is necessity with the will, and not against it; and by the law both of God and man, the act he has committed is a crime, and he is treated as a criminal.

The only necessity which excuses a man for doing what is evil is a necessity that forces him by an external violence to do it, against the bent of his will struggling most honestly and determinedly to resist it. But if it be with the bent of the will, if the necessity he lies under of doing the evil thing consists in this, that his will is strongly and determinedly bent upon the doing of it—then such a necessity as this, so far from extenuating the man's guiltiness, just aggravates it the more, and stamps upon it, in all plain moral estimation, a character of more foul atrocity. For set before us two murderers, and the one of them differing from the other in the keenness and intensity of his thirst for blood. We have already evinced to you, how there is one species of necessity which extinguishes the criminality of the act altogether—even that necessity which operates with violence upon the muscles of the body, and overbears the moral desires and tendency of the mind. But there is another species of necessity which heightens the criminality of murder—even that necessity which lies in the taste and tendency of the mind towards this deed of unnatural violence. And if of these two assassins of the cave or of the highway, the one was pointed out to us who felt the most uncontrollable impulse towards so fell a perpetration, and to whom the fears and the cries and the agonies of the trembling victim ministered the most savage complacency—he of the two, even in spite of the greater inward necessity that lay upon him, would raise in the breast of every plain and unsophisticated man the sensations of keenest indignancy, and be regarded by all as the one whom the voice of justice most loudly demanded as a sacrifice to the peace and the protection of society.

It is enough then that a disposition to moral evil exists; and however it originated, the disposition in itself, with all the evil acts which emanate therefrom, calls forth by the law of our moral nature a sentiment of blame or reprobation. It may have been acquired by education; or it may have been infused into us by the force of surrounding example; or it may be the fruit,

instead of the principle, of many wilful iniquities of conduct; or finally, it may, agreeably to the doctrine of original sin, have been as much transmitted in the shape of a constitutional bias from father to son, as is the ferocity of a tiger, or the industry of an ant, or the acidity of an apple, or the odour and loveliness of a rose. When we look to the beauty of a flower, we feel touched and attracted by the mere exhibition of the object, nor is it necessary that we should know whence this property sprung into existence. When we taste the sourness of a particular fruit, it matters not to the sensation whether this unpleasant quality is due to the training of the tree, or to some accident of exposure it has met with, or finally, to some inherent universal tendency diffused over the whole species, and derived through seeds and acorns from the trees of former generations. When assailed by the fury of some wild vindictive animal, we meet it with the same resentment, and inflict upon it the same chastisement or revenge—whether the malignant rage by which it is actuated be the sin of its nature derived to it from inheritance, or the sin of its education derived to it from the perverse influence of the circumstances by which it has been surrounded. And lastly, when moral corruption is offered to our notice in the character of man—when we see a depraved will venting itself forth in deeds of depravity—when, in every individual we meet with, we behold an ungodliness or a selfishness or a deceit or an impurity which altogether make the moral scenery of earth so widely different from the moral scenery of heaven—it positively makes no difference to our feeling of loathsomeness and culpability, wherewith we regard it, whether the vitiating taint rises anew on every single specimen of humanity, or whether it has run in one descending current from the progenitor of our race, and thence spread the leprosy of moral evil over all succeeding generations. The doctrine of original sin leaves the distinction between virtue and vice just where it found it; nor does it affect the sense of moral approbation wherewith we regard the former, or the moral dislike and feeling of demerit with which the latter ought to be regarded.

If it be asked how this can be, we reply that we do not know—that so it is we know, but how it is we do not know. It is not the only instance in which we are compelled to stop short at ultimate facts of which we can offer no other explanation than simply that such is the case; or rather, it is like in this respect to every other department which nature and experience offer to

human contemplation. We can no more account for our physical than we can account for our moral sensations. When we eat the fruit of the bitter orange-tree we feel the bitterness, but we do not know how this sensation upon our palate stands connected with a constitutional property in the tree, which has descended to it through a long line of ancestry, from the creation of the world. And when we look to the bitter fruit of transgression on the life and character of any individual of the human species, and feel upon our moral sense a nauseating revolt from the odious spectacle—we do not know how this impression upon the taste of the inner man stands connected with a natural tendency which is exemplified by all, and has been derived through a series of many centuries from the parent stock of the great human family. But certain it is that the origin of our depravity has nothing to do with the sense and feeling of its loathsomeness, wherewith we regard it. And let that depravity have been transmitted to us from Adam, or be a kind of spontaneous and independent production in each of his children—still we cannot look to it without moral censure and moral condemnation.

There is not a more effectual way of bringing this to the test than by making one man the object of injustice and of provocation from another man. Let a neighbour inflict upon any of you some moral wrong or moral injury—will not the quick and ready feeling of resentment rise immediately in your hearts? Will you stop to inquire whence your enemy has derived the malice or the selfishness under which you suffer? Is it not simply enough that he tramples upon your rights and interests, and does so wilfully—is not this of itself enough to call out the sudden reaction of an angry judgment, and a keen retaliation upon your part? If it be under some necessity which operates against his disposition, this may soften your resentment. But if it be under that kind of necessity which arises from the strength of his disposition to do you harm—this, so far from softening, would just whet and stimulate your resentment against him the more. So far from taking it as an apology, that he is forcibly constrained by the obstinate tendency of his will to injure and oppress you—this would just add to the exasperation of your feelings; and the more hearty goodwill you saw he had to hurt or to traduce or to defraud you, the more in fact would you hold him to be the culpable subject of your most just and righteous indignation. And thinkest thou, O man! who judgest another

for his returns of unworthiness to you—that thou wilt escape the judgment of God, if thou makest the very same returns of unworthiness to Him? Out of your own mouth you will be condemned; and if, out of the sin of his original nature, your neighbour has ever done that which you felt to be injurious and at which you were offended—then be assured that the plea of your original nature will never shield you from the curse and the condemnation due to the sins which have emanated from that nature against God.

These remarks may prepare the way for all that man by his moral sense can understand or go along with in the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to all his posterity. We confess that we are not able to perceive how one man is at all responsible for the personal doings of another whom he never saw, and who departed this life many centuries before him. But if the personal doings of a distant ancestor have in point of fact corrupted his moral nature, and if this corruption has been transmitted to his descendants—then we can see how these become responsible, not for what their forefather did, but for what they themselves do under the corrupt disposition that they have received from their forefather. And if there be a guilt attachable to evil desires as well as to evil doings, and if the evil desire which prompted Adam to his first transgression enter into the nature of all his posterity—then we can see how his posterity should be the objects of moral blame and moral aversion, if not on account of the transgression which Adam committed, at least on account of such a wrong principle in their hearts as would lead every one of them to the very same transgression in the very same circumstances. It is thus that Adam has transmitted a guilt the same with his own, as well as a depravity the same with his own, among all the individuals and families of our species—if not that each of them is liable to a separate reckoning on account of the offence committed in the garden of Eden, at least that each of them is liable to a separate reckoning on account of his own separate and personal depravity—a depravity which had its rise in the offence that was then and there committed; and a depravity which would lead in every one instance to the same offence in the same circumstances of temptation. According to this explanation, every man still reapeth not what another soweth, but what he soweth himself. Every man eateth the fruit of his own doings. Every man beareth the burden of his own tainted and accursed nature. Every man suffereth for

his own guilt and not for Adam's guilt; and if he is said to suffer for Adam's guilt, the meaning is, that from Adam he inherits a corruption which lands him in a guilt equal to that of Adam.

It were correct enough to say, that the sin of Catiline, that great conspirator against the State, is imputable to an equally great conspirator of the present day—not that he is at all responsible for what Catiline did, but responsible for his own sin that was the same with that of Catiline. And it would strengthen the resemblance, if it was the recorded example of Catiline which filled him with a kindred disposition, and hurried him on to a kindred enterprise. Then as Adam was the efficient cause of our corruption, so Catiline was of his; but each suffers for the guilt of his own sin nevertheless—a guilt the same with us as that of Adam, and the same with him as that of Catiline.

Our Saviour cursed a fig-tree because of its barrenness. Conceive a fig-tree to be cursed because of the bitterness of its fruit. It is for its own bitter fruit, and not for the bitter fruit of its first ancestor, that it is laid under the doom which has been pronounced upon it. But still its first ancestor may have been a tree of sweetly-flavoured fruit at its first formation, and a pestilential gust may have passed over and tainted it; and it may, by the laws of physiological succession, have sent down its deteriorated nature among all its posterity; and it may be true of each individual descendant, that, while it is for its own qualities it is so loathed and so condemned, still was it from its great originating parent that it inherited the taint by which it has been vitiated, and the sentence by which it has been accursed.

Many, we are aware, carry the doctrine of imputation farther than this, and make each of us liable to answer at the bar of God's judicature for Adam's individual transgression. We shall only say of this view at present, that whether it be scriptural or not, we are very sure that we cannot follow it by any sense of morality or rightfulness that is in our own heart. Still, even on this highest imagination of the doctrine, we hold the way of God to man, in all the bearings of this much agitated subject, to be capable of a most full and triumphant vindication; and with our attempt to evince this, we trust we shall be able in one address more to finish all that is general and preliminary to the passage that is now before us. When we next resume this topic we shall endeavour to silence the rising murmurs which we doubt not have been already felt in many a heart on the hearing of

the representation that we have now given—to prove that there is not an individual amongst us who has a right to complain of the hardness or severity of God's dealing with us—to come forth with that gospel, in the utterance of which God may be said to wipe His hands of the blood of all who come within reach of the hearing of it—and to neutralize all your complaints about the curse and the corruption that have been entailed upon us, by lifting the welcome invitation to every man, of a righteousness overpassing all that we have lost, and of a grace that will restore us to a higher state of innocence and glory than that from which we are now the sentenced and the exiled wanderers.

LECTURE XXV.

ROMANS V. 12-21.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

WE have now disserted at very great length on the tenet of original sin, both as it includes the two great articles of original depravity and original guilt—understanding by the one, that every individual of the human race brings a corrupt nature into the world with him, by which he is so inclined to what is sinful that in fact all men are sinners: and understanding by the other, that he is justly responsible for sin thus emanated by his evil nature—even though that nature came down by inheritance from his first parents, who, without being corrupt originally, corrupted themselves and sent down their acquired propensities to evil among all their descendants. We are aware that the doctrine of a guilt transmitted by Adam is commonly carried farther than this—affirming, not merely that all men are to blame for the sins they personally do under the instigations of an evil nature transmitted by Adam, but that they are also to blame for the proper and individual act of transgression done by Adam himself in the garden of Eden. We have not denied that this may be the doctrine of Scripture; we have only said that

our own moral sense is altogether unable to apprehend it, and that while we can perceive how man is justly culpable for every iniquitous deed of his history caused by the iniquitous tendency of his heart, however that tendency may have been derived—yet, we cannot perceive how it is that he is justly culpable for an iniquitous deed done, not by himself but by another who lived nearly six thousand years ago. This, however, may be the real truth of the case, whether we are able or not to comprehend it. The Bible tells us of many things, of which without its informations we should have been altogether ignorant; and of many things the reason of which is still a mystery to our understanding—though the reality of them has, by the testimony of God's own mouth, been made perfectly good to our convictions: And, therefore, on this point of imputation also, we would lie open to the informations of the record—fully assured that there is nothing there, either at variance with absolute truth, or at variance with the character of that Being who is all goodness and justice and holiness and truth.

It is to the vindication of this character that we mean to devote the last of these preliminary addresses which we have thought fit to deliver, ere we come forward with a detailed exposition of the passage that we have so repeatedly read out to you. We have already attempted to reconcile the doctrine of original sin, as consisting of depravity, with the experience of man; and we have also attempted to show in how far this doctrine, as consisting of guilt and the imputation of guilt, is reconcilable with the moral sense of man. And let us now proceed to meet the charges and complaints that have been uttered because of it against the dealings of God with His creatures—as if He had carried Himself with unjust and tyrannical severity against them—as if He had laid upon them an inevitable doom of wretchedness against which all their struggles are unavailing—as if He had brought them into the world in a state of helpless captivity to the power of corruption, and then left them to perish under a load of necessity that He Himself had inflicted—as if He had made that to be the fault of man which in fact was the appointment of God, that no willing and no striving on the part of the creature could possibly overrule: And thus there is a very prevalent feeling of its being indeed a great hardship that God should so have dealt with the rational species that He has planted in our world—permitting its tainted families to come into being at all, and to put forth their successive generations in

a state under which they behove to suffer, and so very many of them to suffer everlastingly.

We do not want to disguise this objection ; but after having presented it in all its strength, we want to dispose of it. And in our attempt to vindicate the dealings of God with the species, let us just begin with that portion of the species that are now within reach of our hearing. What is it that any one of you has to complain of? You speak of hardness—how or in what respect is that you have been hardly dealt with? You say that without your consent a corrupt nature has been given you ; and so stuck on, as it were, that it cleaves and adheres and keeps by you wherever you go, and that with its presence so urging and so pursuing you, sin is unavoidable ; and yet there is a law which denounces upon this sin the torments of a whole eternity. Well then, is this an honest complaint on your part? Do you really feel your corrupt nature to be a curse and a wretchedness, and are you accordingly most desirous to be rid of it? Would you like a purifying process to take effect upon you which shall at length transform that vitiated nature that has so annoyed you and so called forth your animadversions upon God? Do you sincerely feel it to be your provocation and your plague that such an evil thing has been attached to your constitution—for if so, you would surely like of all things that it were again detached from you? No man really feels that to be a burden which he does not feel a wish and a weariness to be delivered from ; and is this your wish and your weariness respecting the depravity of heart that has so germinated from very infancy, and so grown through all the successive years of your life in the world, as to have made all your imaginations in the sight of God to be only evil, and that continually? Do you complain that God should thus rate you and reckon with you for a sinfulness which you got by inheritance, and without your consent—instead of getting it, as Adam did before you, by his own deliberate choice and the voluntary surrender of himself to the power of temptation? Well then, this is your complaint against God ; and here is the way in which we meet it. God is at this moment holding out to you in offer the very relief which you now tell us that your heart is set upon. He is in perfect readiness for the administration of an unfailing specific against that moral disease of which you complain so heavily. If the complaint be just as honest in the feeling of it as in its terms it is severe, then are your desires and God's desires most thoroughly at one ; and you are not more

willing for being emancipated from the power of corruption than He is willing to set you at large and translate you into the pure element of holiness. Does not God wipe His hands of the foul charge that His sinful creatures would prefer against Him, when He says, and says honestly to us all—Turn unto me, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you? You are shapen in iniquity, and if in iniquity you descend to the grave you will arise from it to an unrelenting judgment-seat, and to a then unescapable condemnation. But ere that happens, God meets you upon your way, and positively offers to make new creatures of you, and in the washing of regeneration ready to be poured forth, if you only desire it, is He willing even now to sweep away the whole burden of the fancied injustice which causes you to murmur. And so near does He bring Himself to you that He stands pledged to grant the clean heart and the right spirit, if you will only care so much about them as to inquire for them at His hand; and He promises the Holy Ghost to all who ask it. Do you indeed feel it a hardship that your heart is naturally so sinful? Come with the grievance, and come with an honest desire to be rid of it before God. Say to Him, and say it in good faith—Take this heart of mine such as it is, and make it such as it should be; and if this be the honest aspiration of a heart that is really desirous of what it pretends to be—there will be nothing wanting on God's part to renew and to purify and at length to wash most thoroughly away that original taint over which you appear to mourn as if it were indeed so much the bane of your existence that your existence is not worth the having. God bids you only put Him to the proof by your petitions, and then see whether He will not pour out a blessing upon you; and is it the Being who has descended so far, and testified His willingness to grant you a present deliverance from the power of sin, and a future everlasting translation from all its allurements—is it He, we ask, whom you would thus challenge and upbraid for the undoing of your eternity?

That the creature should complain of a corruption which he loves and wilfully perseveres in—that he should reproach the Creator for it, who is pointing out to him the way by which he can escape, and offers him all strength and aid to accomplish it—that he should lift an accusing voice against God for having brought him within the limits of so foul a moral domain as the one he occupies, and at the same time turn away from the beseeching voice of the same God, stretching forth His hand

for the purpose of taking him out of that domain if he will, and ushering him among the glories of a pure and spiritual region—that he should murmur because of a sinfulness in his nature which he at the same time wilfully cherishes and retains and obstinately refuses to let it go—that he should affect either to mourn or to be indignant on account of an inborn depravity, and that too at the moment when he spurns the proposition which God makes to him of an inborn grace whereby he would cease to be that old creature of whom he says it is hard that he should have been so formed, and become that new creature respecting whom he taxes God for injustice that He had not so made him—Who does not see that every possible objection which can be raised against the Creator on account of what man is by nature is most fully and fairly disarmed by what God offers to man in the gospel? And if he will persist in charging upon God a depravity that He both asks and enables us to give up did not we firmly retain it by the wilful grasp of our own inclinations, is it not plain that on the day of reckoning it will be clear to the intelligent morality of all the assembled witnesses that the complaints of man because of his corruption have been those of a hypocrite, who secretly loved the very thing he so openly complained of; and that God, who will be justified when He speaketh, and clear when He judgeth, has, by the offer of a Spirit that would both quell the corruption and quicken man from his death in trespasses and sins unto holiness, indeed manifested Himself a God both of love and of righteousness, and poured over all His ways to the world in which we live the lustre of a most full and resistless vindication?

We may conceive a human being to be born upon a territory over which there is spread a foul and turbid atmosphere—charged with all the elements of discomfort and disease, and at length in a given time made known to all who breathe it to be wrapped in some devouring flame which would burn up and destroy every creature that should abide within its vortex. And we may further conceive him to murmur against the God who thus had placed him within the bounds of such a habitation. But let God point his way to another country, where freshness is in every breeze, and the whole air sheds health and fertility and joy over the land that it encompasseth—let Him offer all the means and facilities of conveyance, so as to make it turn simply upon the man's will, whether he should continue in the accursed region where he is or be transported to another region

which teems with all the enjoyments that he complains he has not—And will not the worthless choice to abide rather than to move, acquit God of the severity wherewith He has been charged, and unmask the hypocrisy of all the reproaches which man has uttered against Him? Will it not lay the blood of the coming destruction upon his own head, and though while he lives it be in disquietude, and when he dies it be in the volcanic whirl of the fierce and fiery element by which he is surrounded—is not the man the author of his own undoing? and can the blame or the execration of it be laid on that Being who offered to bear him away from the territory of disease and danger, and securely put him down in the midst of a smiling and happy land?

Many may think this speculative; but we trust that there are some here present who feel it most closely and urgently and immediately practical. We stand with the offer of transporting you from the spiritual atmosphere of nature, charged as it is with all that is foul and turbulent and rebellious, and to bear you across the limits of conversion, to an atmosphere of peace and purity and holiness. We declare this gospel unto you. We preach that Jesus who is ready even now to bless every one of you by turning you from your iniquities, and through the channel of whose mediatorship it is that the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are shed abundantly on all who believe. If you refuse to come, it is because you are not willing to come. God will make this clear on the great day of manifestation; and when He passes the condemnatory sentence on those who reject the Saviour, He will prove to the satisfaction of all assembled that those who did not pass from darkness to light abode in the region of darkness just because they loved the darkness, and persisted in the condition of evil just because their deeds were evil. It is thus that He will vindicate Himself, and carry the consent of an observant universe along with Him, when He rebukes away from His presence all of you who have neglected the great salvation. And therefore it is a salvation which we bid your acceptance of at this moment. Open your hearts that Christ may enter in; and under the power of His grace their hardness and vileness and depravity will melt away. We do not promise you an immediate transition from the spiritual element of earth to the spiritual element of heaven; it is gradual; it is by a laborious ascent of fatigue and difficulty and strenuousness that we at length attain those heights where

all is serene and unspotted holiness. The portal of death must be passed ere we reach the cloudless and ethereal expanse of that eternity, where freed from the last dregs of our vitiated nature we can serve God without frailty and without a flaw. There is in these vile bodies of ours some mysterious necessity for dying—there is an original taint which so imbues the whole of our natural constitution that the whole fabric must be taken down; and after its materials have been filtered and refined by the putrefaction of the grave a new fabric will be made out of them, and the believer will then arise in all the first innocence of Adam, and compassed about with a security that shall be everlasting. Yet here the work must be begun—though there and there alone it is consummated. Here we must make head against the prevalence of sin—though there and there alone we shall be delivered from the presence of it. Here the struggle must be made, and the victory be decided—though there and there alone we shall have the triumph and the repose of victory. Here the grace which calls upon you to accept must enter into contest with the corruption that so burdens and distresses you; but there and there alone grace will reign without a rival, and the principle of corruption that now is only kept in check will there be utterly and conclusively extirpated.

What is true of the original corruption is also true of the original guilt. Do you complain of that debt under the weight and oppression of which you came into the world? What ground, we ask, is there for complaining, when the offer is fairly put within your reach of a most free and ample discharge, and that not merely for the guilt of original but also for the whole guilt of your proper and personal sinfulness? It is indeed a very heavy burden that has been entailed upon you by the first Adam; but here we stand with the offer of a deliverance both from it and from all the additions you have made to it by actual transgression, wrought out and made good for you by the suretiship and the ability of the second Adam. Your rescue from corruption is not instantaneous, but your rescue from guilt is. The offer of a free and full forgiveness is even now unto you all; and why do you murmur at the grievousness of the reckoning which is out against you, when there is out along with it the loudly sounding proclamation of remission to all who will, and acceptance to all who will without money or without price? The relief granted in the gospel is at least an adequate counterpart to all the wretchedness which nature has entailed upon

you ; and even now are you invited by union with Christ to be freed from the whole weight of all the responsibility that may have been incurred by your descent from Adam. What you have lost because of Adam's sin is more than made up to you by Christ's righteousness ; and we repeat it, that if there be any hardship in your suffering because of a fault which you did not commit, the hardship is greatly atoned for by your enjoying favour and reward because of an obedience that you did not render. It is thus again that the gospel vindicates God from all the aspersions which have been cast upon His government ; and there is not a man who honestly complains that favour has been lost because of another's demerits, that we cannot silence and even satisfy by telling him that all this favour may be regained because of another's deservings. We interpose the gospel of Jesus Christ as the decisive reply to all the murmurs of those who revolt at the apparent severity of the divine administration ; and affirm, upon the strength of its blessed overtures, that it depends upon man's own choice whether the discharge is not at least equal to the debt, and the recovery of our nature is not at least equal to the ruin of it.

We now hold ourselves prepared for vindicating the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin, even in the farthest extent of it, when it goes beyond the apprehension and acknowledgment of our moral sense altogether. We see how the blame lies upon us of such personal sins as we commit—even though we have been led to the performance of these by a corrupt tendency of nature inherited from Adam. But we do not see how the blame lies upon us of that proper and personal sin which rendered Adam an outcast from Paradise. It may be so though we see it not ; and that it is so is in beautiful and consenting harmony with what we are explicitly assured to be the effect of our union with the Saviour. From Him we derive, not merely a new nature which inclines us to righteousness and holiness, even as we derived from Adam our old nature which inclines us to all that is wicked and ungodly ; but from Him we also derive an imputed righteousness, so that we are reckoned with by God as if we were positively deserving creatures. The merit of Christ's obedience is transferred to us as well as His holy and upright nature, and from the very circumstance of His being called in Scripture the second Adam, from the very way in which He is there designed as a counterpart to the first Adam, would we be inclined to think that the guilt of Adam's disobedience was

transferred to us even as his corrupt and vitiated nature has also been transferred to us—in other words, that Adam is not merely the corrupt parent of a corrupt offspring, who sin because of the depravity wherewith he has tainted all the families of the earth, but who have sinned in him—to use the language of our old divines—as their federal head, as the representative of a covenant which God made with him, and through him with all his posterity.

Certain it is, that to screen a believer from the vengeance of an immutable law something more is necessary than the atonement of his past offences, and the derivation of a holy nature from the Saviour. Even after the principle of grace has been implanted there are the outbreakings of sin which serve to humble and to remind him that never till death has pulverized his body into atoms and the resurrection has again assembled them into a pure and holy structure, shall he be wholly freed from that sore corruption which so adheres and so strives to obtain the victory over him. Still, and at any time after his conversion while he lives in the world, were he treated according to his own deservings, he would be an outcast from the favour of that God whose justice is inflexible; and to meet this justice on the ground of acceptance, he must stand before it in another merit than his own, and be clothed upon with another righteousness than his own. To be in favour with God he stands in need of an imputed as well as of an infused righteousness; and the merit of Christ must be laid to his account, as well as the nature of Christ be laid upon his person. You have no title to complain of the sin of Adam being imputed to you, if you do not complain of the righteousness of Christ being imputed to you. The latter screens you from the former, and it screens you also from the guilt of your own positive offences. Without it even the holiest man upon earth would stand before a God of perfect holiness on a basis of utter insecurity, and with it the greatest sinner upon earth stands on a firmer and a higher vantage-ground than even had all the innocence and virtue of Adam been both transmitted and ascribed to him. And I willingly consent to have the guilt of Adam charged upon me, if along with it the overpassing righteousness of Christ shall be reckoned to me; and let the severities be what they may which lie upon me under the economy of nature and of the law, I see in the corresponding privileges which are freely

offered to me under the economy of the gospel, I see in them the fullest and the noblest compensation.

The question of original sin is allied with that of the origin of evil, and a very deep and unyielding obscurity hangs over it—how in a universe framed and upheld by a Being of whom we are taught to believe that He has an arm of infinite power and a heart of infinite goodness—how under His administration such a monster as evil—whether moral or physical—should even be permitted to exist, is indeed a mystery, seated too far back among the depths of primeval creation and of the eternity behind it for us, the puny insects of a day, to explore or to decide upon. One would think of God that He would, if He could, banish all sin and wretchedness from that system of things over which we have always been in the habit of thinking that He has the entire and undivided ascendancy; nor can we at all imagine, how with both the will and the ability of Omnipotence leagued against it sin should ever have found an entrance, or obtained a footing in any of those fair worlds that surround the throne of the universal Father. Yet so it is; and man, with all the tone of an indignant sufferer, is heard to lift his remonstrances against it—as if he bore the whole weight of an injury laid upon him at the pleasure of an arbitrary tyrant who has laid open his dominions to the cruel inroads of a spoiler, who but for Him would have neither had the power nor the liberty of mischief. But without making so much as an attempt to solve the difficulties of a topic so inscrutable, we may at least say that one thought has occurred, which more than any other melts us into acquiescence, and disposes us to look on the rise and continuance of evil as being indeed some dire though mysterious necessity which overhangs creation—and that is, that after all it is not man who bears the whole burden of this dark and awful visitation—neither is it any other creature beside man. It is the Creator in fact who offers to take upon Himself the whole burden of it, or at least to relieve our species of it altogether. It is at His cost and not at ours, unless we so choose it, that sin has invaded the world we tread upon. It is He, the Eternal Son, who went forth to the battle against this Hydra, and who in the soreness of His conflict, bore what millions through eternity could not have borne; and who, though He had all the energies of the Godhead to sustain Him, yet well-nigh gave way under the pressure of a deep and dreadful

endurance; and who by His tears and agonies and cries gave proof to the might of that mysterious adversary over whom He triumphed. Yes, we murmur because of the origin of evil; but Christ was the mighty sufferer who hath borne it away from us; and let us hazard what reflections we may on those who die in ignorance, or who die in infancy—yet, in regard to you who are hearing us, every ground of complaint is annihilated. Christ is offered; and you by confidence in Him, and cleaving unto Him, will reach those happy shores of peace and light and joy, where all sin is for ever banished, and all evil is unknown.

LECTURE XXVI.

ROMANS V. 12-14.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come."

AFTER these lengthened preliminary remarks on the doctrine of original sin, we now proceed to the exposition of the verses of this remarkable passage in detail.

Ver. 12.—The death which entered into the world by sin includes in it a great deal more than that temporal death to which in common language the term is restricted. It is very true that death, in the ordinary sense of the word, formed part of the punishment laid upon our first parents and their posterity. But there was a sentence of death executed on the very day of the transgression—"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"—and yet Adam survived his expulsion from Paradise several hundred years; and the way in which the truth of the threatening was accomplished was by the infliction of spiritual death. By the fall he lost that which Christ by His salvation restores to our species. If a title to eternal life hereafter and spiritual life here came by Christ, it is because they went away from us by Adam. He on that day lost the light of the divine countenance. A sense of God's favour died away from his heart, and it was this which cheered and sustained him in all the joys of existence. Hope, that sunshine of the soul, took its departure, and left the blackness of desolation behind it. The death in trespasses and sins began with the commission of the first sin. It was then that trust gave place to terror. It was then that jealousy of God put out from the bosom its wonted joy in God. It was then that the righteousness of the soul expired, because it was left without a principle and without an object—alike unable to recover the acceptance that had been lost, and unwilling for the labours of a service where all love for the master had been extinguished among the fears and the suspicions and the chilling alienation of guilt. This was a

death which took place long before the dissolution of the body ; and when the body falls into dust, this is a death which the soul carries with it into the place of its separate habitation. The literal death is only a stepping-stone to the full accomplishment of that sentence the operation of which began on Adam with the very first hour of his history as a sinner. It was then that he became dead unto God, and that his soul was driven into exile from all the joys and communications of the divine life—just as surely as in person he was exiled from the scenes of loveliness and delight that were in the garden of Paradise. It is this character of the soul which forms its own punishment in the place of condemnation ; and here in every unregenerate bosom is the germ of that which ministers to the second death on the other side of the grave all its agony and all its bitterness.

It is a matter of experience, as we have already amply endeavoured to demonstrate, that this death of the soul has passed upon all men just as surely and as universally as the dissolution of the body. There is one species of life or of vivacity that remains to us—vivacity to the things of sense, so that they form the world in which we move, and the objects to which alone it is that we are feelingly alive. There is another species of life or of vivacity that is extinguished—vivacity to the things of faith, so as that God and eternity and the unseen realities of another world have no more power to excite or to interest us than if we were inanimate beings. It is the re-awakening of this vivacity in the soul which is stated in the Bible as an event equally miraculous with a resurrection from literal death. It takes effect upon us on our truly receiving Christ. He who believeth on me, though he were dead yet shall he live. He who believeth hath passed from death unto life—a death, on the one hand, in which we may be most profoundly immersed at the very time that we are bustling with eager and intense desire among this world's affairs ; and a life, on the other hand, to which we may be raised long before our bodies have dissolved—a life which begins with conversion, which matures and makes progress along the course of our sanctification, which so far from being arrested by the death of the body is thereby released into a scene of enlargement, and will at length, by the reunion which takes place on the day of judgment, be brought to that state of final accommodation, in which all its powers and all its sensibilities will be for ever consecrated to the full enjoyment of God.

Think then, ye hearers, whether in this sense of the terms,

you are indeed dead or alive. You may surely be sensible if God be practically seen and recognised by you; or if, stopping short at the visions of carnality, you only move in a pictured world of atheism. Then know that Christ is knocking at the door of every sleeper's heart, for the purpose of awakening him. He employs the hope and the offer of His gospel as the instruments of reviving you; and should you close with the proposition of being reconciled through Him unto God, He will cause the breath of another life to animate your powers, and instead of living as you have done heretofore, without God, you will know what it is under the light of His countenance and the influences of His Spirit to live with Him in the world.

This death, then, both temporal and spiritual, is the judicial sentence inflicted on all who have incurred it. On whatever subject we see it taking effect, we may infer of him that he is reckoned a sinner and dealt with accordingly. And if we see that in point of fact this death hath passed upon all men, it proves that in the estimation of the Judge all men have sinned.

Ver. 13.—This sentence, it may be remarked, was in full operation anterior to the promulgation of the Mosaic law. The death of the soul in trespasses and sins was as much the doom and the characteristic of nature in the antediluvian and patriarchal ages as it is now; and that more visible mortality which sweeps successive generations from the face of the world was as relentless and universal in its ravages. The men of that period were treated as men under guilt, and all shared in the very sentence that was passed and fulfilled on our one common progenitor. Death was dealt out to them all, and just because sin was reckoned to them all. And yet sin is not imputed where there is no law. Under what law then was it that between the creation and the delivery of the commandments from Mount Sinai men were counted as transgressors? Not the Jewish law, which then did not exist—but some prior law which extended over the whole world, and involved all men in one common condemnation.

The truth is, that Paul never lost sight of the main purpose of his argument, which was to reduce Jews and Gentiles to the same footing, and bring the former to a thankful acquiescence in that same salvation of which he welcomed the latter to an equal participation. The Jews were constantly building a superiority to themselves upon their law. They fancied that they stood out, in point of immunity and favour with God, from all the rest of the species—in virtue of the relationship they held with Abra-

ham as their father. The apostle reasons with them on their prior relationship to Adam as their father—a relationship through which sin, and death the sentence of sin, found a like way among all the families of the earth, and from which Abraham himself, the immediate founder of their own nation, was not exempted. He thus confounds the distinction on which the children of Israel were disposed to hold out against the gospel of Jesus Christ; and demonstrating all to be under the virulence of that disease which issued in sin and death from the common fountainhead of our species, he demonstrates all to be in need of the same remedy, and fitting patients for the same healing application.

Ver. 14.—If death reigned from Adam to Moses, it could not be in the shape of a penalty for the violations of the Mosaic law; and yet it was in the shape of a penalty rendered to men for the violation of some law or other. What could that law be? What but either the law of the heart, or the representative law made with Adam, by which he stood to God in the relation of federal head of all his posterity—by which, had he kept it, he would have transmitted the right which he had earned for himself as a privilege won and wrought for by him on behalf of his descendants; but by which, as he broke it, he brought down a forfeiture on his own head, in which all who spring from him do share. In Adam all died, because in Adam all are held to have sinned. Such is the economy under which we sit, an economy which we shall not stop any further to explain or vindicate at present, having already endeavoured to acquit God of all alleged severity against you on the score of your guilt and helplessness by nature—and that by directing your eye to the amplitude of the compensations which are so fully provided and so freely offered to you in the gospel.

Death reigned universally from Adam to Moses; and the term 'even' directs our attention to a class more unlikely than the others to be made partakers of this fatality, and therefore serving still more effectually to mark how far the effect of Adam's sin was carried among the great human family. The death of those who arrived at maturity may have been ascribed to their own wilful transgressions against the law of conscience. Each personally sinned against the light of a known duty. Each transgressed the prohibition of an inward voice, just as effectually as Adam transgressed the prohibition of that voice which was uttered from without. And each therefore may have been conceived to die in the way of retribution for his own personal and

particular offences. But to preclude this inference altogether, and to make manifest the law—of Adam incurring the guilt of a sin unto death for himself and for all his posterity, we see that this penalty of death is laid even upon those who could not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression—who could not, by any voluntary and deliberate choice, put forth their hand to any actual violation; or in other words, as is generally understood—Death reigned even over infants, who were incapable of sinning as Adam did, when appetite prevailed in its contest with the sense of known duty, and with the fear of known and threatened consequences. There is no internal war of the soul in the heart of an unconscious babe; and yet it too may share in that sad penalty of death which was pronounced upon Adam, and falls without exception on his posterity of all classes and all ages.

In our former illustrations we have attempted to show how the elements of the corrupt nature may all enter into the composition of infancy—how as surely as the ferocity of the tiger exists as an embryo disposition at the very first breath of the animal, so surely may the unfailing germ of a sinful tendency lie incorporated in the heart of a babe among the other ingredients of its moral nature; and which only needs time for growth, that it may break out into the development of actual and committed sin—that thus in fact every child is born in spiritual death, and brings into the world with him that character of the soul, which if not regenerated and made anew will be his character through time and his curse in eternity—so that though this native sinfulness may not be apparent till it come forth at a more advanced period in sinful performance—yet it has just as firm and solid an existence in the frame of an infant, as the tendency to bring forth sour fruit in a particular tree was a tendency which adhered to the sapling many years before the period of bearing, and was even infused into the very seed or acorn from which it has germinated. But should the spiritual death of infants not be palpable, the literal death which forms part of the sentence is exemplified on many of them; and, just as the order to burn thorns and briers would be carried into effect on the youngest as well as on the oldest specimens of a produce so obnoxious, so death goes forth the executioner of an unsparing sentence upon all ages—and the babe of a week old, sinless though he may be in respect of his outward history, yet, with a soul tainted by corruption and a body on which the curse of mortality may at any time be realized, shares alike with the

hoary offender in that sentence, of which as it respects the infant, no other account can be given than that as in Adam he sinned so in Adam he dies.

‘Who is the figure of him that was to come.’ Adam is here stated to be the figure of Jesus Christ; and this statement completes our information respecting the whole amount of the mischief entailed upon his posterity. Experience tells us that from him we inherit a depraved tendency to evil. The moral sense tells us that we justly incur guilt for the sins of our corrupt nature. But neither the one nor the other, do we think, tells us that we are responsible for the sin done by Adam in Paradise. The information, however, which we cannot get from either of these two sources, we get from Scripture—when it announces to us that Adam is the figure of Christ, and that inasmuch as we derive righteousness from the one, we derive guilt and condemnation from the other. Now we know that it is not enough to derive from Christ the cancelment of all the debt that we have already incurred—neither is it enough to derive from Him a new and a holy nature, under the workings of which we aspire after a heavenly character, and at length reach it. In the midst of all our aspirings there is a mingling of sin, so long as we are compassed about with these vile bodies; and as God will not look upon us with regard unless we offer ourselves to Him in a righteousness that is worthy of that regard, we need to have the righteousness of Jesus Christ imputed to us, just as much as we need His sanctifying grace to be infused into us. And accordingly we are told in express terms, that the merit of Christ’s good actions is ascribed to us; and if Adam be the figure of Christ, this benefit that we obtain from the latter has a counterpart bane that has descended upon us from the former; or in other words, the demerit of Adam’s bad action is ascribed to us. And as under the second economy we are held to be rewardable for the obedience of the one—so, to complete the figurative resemblance, we under the first economy are held to be responsible for the disobedience of the other.

This part of the doctrine of original sin we hold to be matter of pure revelation—a portion of God’s jurisprudence the whole rationale of which we cannot comprehend, although, as we have endeavoured to show, not in any way at war with tenderness and love to the children of men. For, leaving the two cases of heathenism and infancy to Himself, what have we, who are neither heathen nor infants, to complain of? Is it that

our estate by nature has been left so heavily entailed by our first progenitor? then there is a surety provided, to the benefit of which we are all most abundantly welcome, and by the acceptance of which the estate is disburdened, and fully restored to all the value it ever had. I am glad to have been a sharer in all the miseries of Adam's rebellion, as that is the very circumstance which has marked me out as a welcome sharer in all the privileges of Christ's mediation. I am glad to have incurred all the forfeitures which were laid upon Adam and his degenerate offspring, as this is the very thing which has brought me within the scope of a most glorious amnesty and a most ample restoration. I will not quarrel with the doctrine of original sin, but hold it a kindness to have it laid before me—as to me it is the very finger-post which points my way of access and of triumph to that righteousness which is unto all and upon all who believe. It is a singular dealing of God, that He should rate me for another's sin, and it evinces His ways to be not as men's ways; but I will not complain of it, as I have a most secure and honourable refuge in another dealing of God's, equally singular, but in which it is my chiefest interest and will at length be my most exalted felicity to acquiesce—even that He should reward me for another's obedience; and that instead of looking to me as I am in myself, or looking to me as I am in Adam, He should look unto me as I am in Christ, and lavish upon me all that benignity which He feels towards His only beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

In the three verses that follow we have such a parallel drawn between the evil entailed upon us by the first Adam and the good purchased and procured for us by the second Adam, as to evince that there is something more than compensation—such an overbalance of blessedness provided to us by the gospel as may well serve to reconcile us to the whole of this wondrous administration.—Ver. 15-17.—“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”

LECTURE XXVII.

ROMANS V. 15-19.

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

WE do feel that there is a considerable difficulty in this short passage, and the following is the only explanation that we are able to give of it. You will observe that in the fourteenth verse the effect of Adam's sin in bringing death upon his posterity is demonstrated by this circumstance, that the sentence had full execution, even upon those who had not in their own persons sinned as he did. Death reigned even over them; and it made Adam to be the figure of Christ, that what the one brought upon mankind by his disobedience, the other by his obedience did away.

But Christ did more than do away the sentence which lay upon mankind, because of the sin of Adam being imputed to them. This and no other sentence was all that could be inflicted on infants, or those who did not sin actually. But in addition to the guilt that we have by inheritance, there is also a guilt which all who live a few years in the world incur by practice. The one offence of Adam landed us in guilt; but the many offences of the heart and life of us all, have wofully accumulated that guilt. And we stand in need, not merely of as much grace as might redeem us from the forfeiture that was passed on the whole human family in consequence of the transgression of their first parent, but also of as much new grace as might redeem us from the curse and the condemnation of our own iniquities—as might redeem us not merely from the debt that has been en-

tailed upon us, but from the additional debt that has been incurred by us.

And thus it is, that not as the offence so also is the gift; for the gift by Christ compensates for more evil than the offence by Adam has entailed. Through that one offence the penalty of death passed upon many—even upon all whom Adam represented. But the grace of God, and the gift which emanated therefrom and was won for us by the one man Jesus Christ, greatly exceeds in its amount the recalment of this penalty from the many whom Christ represented. The condemnation we derive from Adam was passed upon us because of his one offence. The free gift of justification which we receive from Christ not merely reverses that condition of guilt in which Adam has placed us, but that still more aggravated condition of guilt in which we have been placed by the multitude of our own offences. We obtain not only justification from the guilt of Adam's one offence, but justification from the guilt of our own many offences. Such was the virulent mischief even of the one offence, that through it and it alone, even when separated from all actual guilt—as in the case of infants, death reigned in the world. There was more grace needed, however, than would suffice merely to counteract this virulence—for greatly had it been aggravated by the abundance of actual iniquity among men; and for this there was an abundance, or as it might have been translated, a surplus of grace provided, so that while the effect of Adam's single offence was to make death reign, greatly must the power of the restorative administered by the second Adam exceed the malignity of the sin that has been transmitted to us by the first Adam—inasmuch as it heals not merely the hereditary but all the superinduced diseases of our spiritual constitution, and causes those over whom death reigned solely on account of Adam's guilt to reign in life, though for their own guilt as well as Adam's they had rightfully to die.

This is all the length which we can penetrate into this passage. We see affirmed in it the superiority of that good which Christ has done for us over that evil which Adam has entailed upon us. We see in it enough to stop the mouth of any gainsayer who complains that he has been made chargeable for a guilt which he never contracted—for we there see announced to us, not merely release from this one charge, but from all the additional charges which by our own wilful disobedience we have brought upon ourselves. The heir of a burdened property

who curses the memory of his father and complains of the weight and hardship of the mortgages he has left behind him, ought in all justice to be appeased, when his father's friend, moved by regard to his family, not only offers to liquidate the debts that were transmitted to him by inheritance, but also the perhaps heavier debts of his own extravagance and folly. From the mouth of a wilful and obstinate sinner may we often hear the reproach of God for the imputation of Adam's sin to his blameless and unoffending posterity, and were he indeed a blameless individual who was so dealt with there might be reason for the outcry of felt and fancied injustice. But seeing that in hardened impiety, or at least in careless indifference, he spends his days, living without God in the world, and accumulating voluntarily upon his own head the very guilt against which he protests so loudly when laid upon him by the misconduct of another—this ought at least to mitigate a little the severity of his invective; and it ought wholly to disarm and to turn it, when a covering so ample is stretched forth, if he will only have it, both for the guilt at which he murmurs and for the guilt of his own misdoings. Nor has he any right to protest against the share that has been assigned to him in the doom of Adam's disobedience, when, wilfully as he has aggravated that doom upon himself, there is a grace held out to him, and a gift by grace, which so nobly overpasses all the misery of man's unregenerate nature, and all its condemnation.

Perhaps there is a great deal more in this passage than we have been able to bring out of it. It is likely enough that the apostle may have had in his mind the state of the redeemed when they are made to reign in life by Jesus Christ, as contrasted with what the state of man would have been had Adam persisted in innocency, and bequeathed all the privileges of innocence to a pure and untainted posterity. In this latter case, our species would have kept their place in God's unfallen creation, and maintained that position in the scale of order and dignity which was at first assigned to them; and though lower than the angels, would at least have shone with an unpolled though a humbler glory, and have either remained upon earth, or perhaps have been transplanted to heaven with the insignia of all those virtues which they had kept untainted and entire upon their own characters. Now certain it is that the redeemed in heaven will be made to recover all that personal worth and accomplishment which was lost by the fall, and in point of moral

lustre will shine forth at least with all that original brightness in which humanity was formed ; and in the songs of their joyful eternity will there be ingredients of transport and of grateful emotion, which but for a Redeemer who washed them from their sins in His blood could never have been felt ; and what perhaps is more than all, they are invested with an order of merit which no prowess of archangel could ever win—they are clothed with a righteousness purer than those heavens which are not clean in the sight of infinite and unspotted holiness—they are seen in the face of Him who takes precedency over all that is created ; and besides being admitted into the honour of that more special and intimate relationship which subsists between the divine Messiah and those who are the fruit and travail of His soul, it is indeed a wondrous distinction, that the Son of God, by descending to the fellowship of our nature, has ennobled and brought up the nature of man to a pre-eminence so singularly glorious.

Verses 18, 19.—‘ Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners ; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.’

The three last verses state the disparity between the two Adams, in respect of the amount of good and evil conveyed by them. The two before us state the similarity between them in respect of the mode of conveyance of this good and this evil. They contain in fact the strength of the argument for the imputation of Adam’s sin. As the condemnation of Adam comes to us, even so does the justification by Christ come to us. Now we know that the merit of the Saviour is ascribed to us—else no atonement for the past, and no renovation of heart or of life that is ever exemplified in this world for the future, will suffice for our acceptance with God. Even so then must the demerit of Adam have been ascribed to us. The analogy affirmed in these verses leads irresistibly to this conclusion. The judgment that we are guilty is transferred to us from the actual guilt of the one representative—even as the judgment that we are righteous is transferred to us from the actual righteousness of the other representative. We are sinners in virtue of one man’s disobedience, independently of our own personal sins ; and we are righteous in virtue of another’s obedience, independently of our own per-

sonal qualifications. We do not say but that through Adam we become personally sinful—inheriting as we do his corrupt nature ; neither do we say but that through Christ we become personally holy—deriving out of His fulness the very graces which adorned His own character. But as it is at best a tainted holiness that we have on this side of death, we must have something more than it in which to appear before God ; and the righteousness of Christ reckoned unto us and rewarded in us is that something. The something which corresponds to this in Adam, is his guilt reckoned unto us and punished in us—so that to complete the analogy, as from him we get the infusion of his depravity, so from him also do we get the imputation of his demerit.

One may suppose from the eighteenth verse, that the number who are justified in Christ is equal to the number who are condemned in Adam ; and that this comprehends the whole human race. But by the term ‘all,’ we are merely to understand—all on the one hand who are in that relation to Adam, which infers the descent of his guilt upon them—and that is certainly the whole family of mankind ; and thus ‘all’ on the other hand, who are in that relation to Christ which infers the descent of His righteousness upon them—and that is only the family of believers. As in Adam, it is said, all die—even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But the ‘all’ does not refer to the same body of people. The first, who die in Adam, evidently refer to the whole human race. But the second, who live in Christ, are restricted by the apostle to those who are Christ’s, and will be made alive by Him at His coming. All men have not faith, and all men therefore will not reign in life by Christ Jesus.

For anything we know, the mediation of Christ may have affected in a most essential way the general state of humanity ; and by some mode unexplained and inexplicable may it have bettered the condition of those who die in infancy, or who die in unreached heathenism, and aggravated the condition of none but those who bring upon themselves the curse and the severity of a rejected gospel. But the matter which concerns you is, that unless you receive Christ in time you will never reign with Him in eternity. You will not be admitted into the number of those ‘all’ who, though they comprehend the entire family of believers, do not comprehend any that obey not the gospel ; and it is at your peril, if when the offer of an interest in the righteousness of Christ is placed within your reach you turn in indifference away from it.

And it is of vital importance for you to know, that the free gift, though it comes not upon you all in the way of absolute conveyance, at least comes upon you all in the way of offer. It is yours if you will. The offer is unto all and upon all who now hear us—though the thing offered is only unto all and upon all who believe. We ask each individual among you to isolate himself from the rest of the species—to conceive for a moment that he is the only sinner upon the face of the earth, that none but he stands in need of an atoning sacrifice, and none but he of an everlasting righteousness, brought in by another, and that might avail for his justification before God. Let him imagine, that for him the one and solitary offender Christ came on the express errand to seek and to save—that for him He poured out His soul unto the death—that for him the costly apparatus of redemption was raised—that for him and for him alone, the Bible was written, and a messenger from heaven sent to entreat that he will enter into reconciliation with God through that way of mediatorship which God in His love had devised for the express accommodation of this single wanderer, who had strayed—an outcast and an alien—from the habitations of the unfallen: And that it now turns upon his own choice, whether he will abide among the paths of destruction or be readmitted to all the honours and felicities of the place from which he had departed. There is nothing surely wanting to complete the warrant of such an individual for entering into hope and happiness; and yet, ye hearers, it is positively not more complete than the warrant which each and all of you have at this moment. To you—individually to you—God is holding out this gift for your acceptance—you is He beseeching to come again into friendship with Him. With you is He expostulating the cause of your life and your death, and bidding you choose between the welcome offer of the one, and the sure alternative of the other if the offer be rejected. He is now parleying the matter with every hearer; and just as effectually as if that hearer were the only creature in the world to whom the errand of redemption was at all applicable. There is nothing in the multitude of hearers by whom you are surrounded that should at all deaden the point of its sure and specific application to yourself. The message of the gospel does not suffer in respect of its appropriateness to you, by the ranging abroad of its calls and its entreaties over the face of the whole congregation. The commission is to preach the gospel to *every*, and surely that is the same with preaching the

gospel to *each*. It does not become less pointedly personal in its invitation by its being made more widely diffusive. The dispersion of the gospel embassy over the face of the whole world does not abate, by one single iota, either the loudness or the urgency of the knock which it is making at your door. This is a property which no extension of the message can ever dissipate. It cannot be shipped off, either in whole or in part, by the missionary vessel which carries the news and the offers of salvation to other lands. Your minister speaks with no less authority, though thousands and thousands more are preaching at the same moment along with him. Your Bible carries no less emphatic intimation to you, though Bibles are circulating by millions over the mighty amplitudes of population that are on every side of you. God through the medium of these conveyances is holding out as distinct an overture to you, and pledging Himself to as distinct a fulfilment, as if you were the only sinner He had to deal with; and whether He beseeches you to be reconciled, or bids you come unto Christ on the faith that you will not be cast out, or invites you weary and heavy laden to cast your burden upon Him and He will sustain it, or sets forth to you a propitiation, and tells you that your reliance upon its efficacy is all that is needed to make it effectual to you—be very sure that all this is addressed as especially to yourself as if you heard it face to face by the lips of a special messenger from heaven—that God is bringing Himself as near as if He named you by a voice from the skies; so that if you, arrested by all this power and closeness of application, shall venture your case on the calls and the promises of the gospel, there is not one call that will not be followed up, nor one promise that will not be fully and perfectly accomplished.

The thing offered in this passage is, that you shall be instated in the righteousness of Christ. Let me crave your attention to the substantial meaning and effect of such an overture. The technicals of theology are so familiar to the ear that they fail to arouse the understanding; and the thinking principle often lies in complete dormancy, while there is a kind of indolent satisfaction felt by the mind at the utterance and the cadency of sounds to which it has been long accustomed. The proposal that Christ's righteousness shall become your righteousness in such a way as that you will be honoured and rewarded and loved and dealt with by God just as you would have been had this right-

eousness been yielded in your own person and by your own performances—this, ye hearers, is the very jet and essence of the gospel ; and could we only prevail on you to entertain the wondrous proposal and to close with it, then like a man translated from beggary to some exalted order of merit that had been won for him by another, might you instantly be clothed in the glories of a high and splendid investiture, recognised by God himself, and by all the subject ranks of His administration, as the occupiers of a dignity and a constitutional standing, to which all the homage due to worth and excellence and lofty prospects may rightfully be paid. You would become kings and priests unto God ; and like many of those sublimities of nature where the noblest effects often spring from the simplest causes, this princely elevation of guilty and degraded man is brought about by the simple credence which he renders to the testimony of God respecting His Son—on which it is that he passes from death unto life, and according to his faith so is it done unto him.

This is the way of being translated into a condition of righteousness with God, and there is no other. We are aware of the tendency of nature to try another ; and that, in the obstinate spirit of legality, it is her constant forth-putting to establish a righteousness of her own—an object in the prosecution of which she is ever sure either to dissipate her strength in a fatigue that is unavailing, or at length to sink down into the repose of a formality that is altogether lifeless and unfruitful. This positively is not the way. The way is to lay your confident hold on the merit of Christ as your plea of acceptance with God. It is to take your determined stand on the basis of His obedience, all the rewards and all the reckonings of which are held out to you in the gospel. It is to go at once to the justification that Christ hath wrought out for all who believe in Him ; and entering upon that region which is lighted up by the Sun of Righteousness, there to offer yourself to the notice of the Divinity, not in that tiny lustre which is created by the feeble sparks of your own kindling, but in that full irradiation which is caught from the beams of a luminary so glorious. God, to look on you with complacency, must see you not as shining in any native splendour of your own, but as shone upon by the splendour of Him who is full of grace and truth. It is only when surrounded with this element that a holy God can regard you with complacency ; and to complete the triumphs of the gospel administration, it is

only when breathing in this atmosphere that you inhale the delights of an affectionate and confiding piety—that the soul breaks forth in the full triumph of her own emancipated powers, on the career of devoted and aspiring obedience—that life and happiness shed the very air of heaven around a believer's heart, and make the service of God—a drudgery before—its most congenial employment; evincing, that as to be in Christ is to have no condemnation, so to be in Christ is to become a new creature, with whom all old things are done away, and all things have become new.

LECTURE XXVIII.

ROMANS V. 20, 21.

“Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound : but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound : that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

It is good to mark, how at certain intervals in the course of the apostle's argument there is often the recurrence of some particular term, by which there may not only be evinced some reigning principle, which it is good for the reader to seize upon, but by which he may obtain a more connected view of the whole demonstration. In some former verses, the apostle insists on the mischief that was entailed upon our species by the one offence of one individual—a mischief which fell even upon the heads of those who in their own persons violated no express commandment, as did Adam ; and he now intimates to us the effect which an authoritative law, subsequently imposed upon mankind, had in turning the one offence into many offences, or in making the offence to abound—so that the power which restores us must not only be of force enough to counteract the guilt of Adam's transgression, but be of force to counteract the guilt of all those innumerable actual transgressions which are committed by those who sin against the known enactments of a rightfully proclaimed authority.

It sounds harsh to say of God that He brought in a law for the direct purpose of adding to the quantity of sin in the world ; and it would soften this harshness, could we make it out to be the meaning of the apostle, not that there was any such design on the part of God, but simply that such was the effect of the law having been introduced among men. Moreover the law entered, not with the intention by the Lawgiver of causing sin to abound, but with the consequence certainly among its subjects that sin did more abound. The law entered, and so sin became more abundant. In the Gospels we often read of a particular thing having been done, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by some old prophet. It looks strange for

the Saviour to have gone out of His way on purpose to bring about an adjustment of this kind between the prophet in the Old Testament and the historian in the New, and therefore some translate the phrase thus—such a thing was done, and so was fulfilled what had been said by one of the prophets. In like manner, and to save the conclusion that God is the wilful author of sin, we would so render the passage before us—as that the law was brought in, not with the previous view of making sin abound, but only with this as the subsequent effect—‘More-over the law entered, and thus sin did abound.’

But it has also been alleged respecting the sense of this passage, that the law has made sin to abound, not by acting as a stimulant to sin, but merely as the revealer of sin—not that it has made sin more abundantly to exist, but that it has made it more abundantly manifest. It has served as a mirror to set forth the deformity of sin. Paul was covetous before he obtained such an apprehension of God’s law as to make him feel that it was sinful to be so ; but when the law came, sin revived—not that the law made Paul covetous, but made him sensible that in consequence of being so he was indeed a sinner. It is not the tendency, say some, to make a man sinful, but to show him to be sinful. It discovers the tinge of guiltiness where no such tinge was seen or suspected before. The effect of the commandment is not to create sin but to convince of sin, and to make it evident to the conscience that it is indeed exceeding sinful. And we have no doubt that this is one great purpose which has been served by the entering in of the law. It has shed a much stronger light on that contrast or diversity which obtains between the character of God and the character of man. It has given a more plentiful demonstration of human guilt and human ungodliness. It has brought home with greater effect upon the conscience that great initiatory lesson, the learning of which is of such importance in Christianity—that the law which furnishes this lesson has been called a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. And this is certainly a most valuable purpose that is accomplished by the law. The application of an even rule to any line or surface may not create the inequalities, but it will make them known. And, in like manner, whether or not the law is in any way the cause of those crooked deviations from the even rule of rectitude which so abound in the character of man, it certainly is the discoverer of those deviations, and makes known to those who are acquainted with the exceeding length

and breadth and constancy of its obligations, how much more iniquities abound in the world than men of unenlightened conscience and no moral delicacy are at all sensible of.

At the same time we do think that the law has done more than reveal sin to the conscience. It has positively added to the amount and the aggravation of sin upon the character. It has laid a heavier responsibility on those to whom it made known its enactments; and on the principle of "to whom much is given of them shall much be required," has a deeper guilt been incurred by those transgressors who do sin in the face of clear and impressive remonstrances from a distinct law, than by those who do it ignorantly and in unbelief. "Father, forgive them," says the Saviour, "for they know not what they do." The men who live under the light of a proclaimed commandment have no benefit from such an intercession. They sin with their eyes open—and after having fought a pitched, and a determined, and perhaps a long-sustained battle, with a conscience well informed. They may do the very same things and no more, than he who has nothing but the feeble guidance of nature to regulate his footsteps; and yet their sin may abound a hundred-fold, and that just because the law has entered with its precepts and its requisitions among them. And beside all this, we do further think, that the law may cause sin actually to abound in the world—not merely by investing forbidden crimes with a deeper hue of sinfulness than they would otherwise have had, but by positively and substantially deepening the atrocity of these crimes and adding to the frequency and the amount of them. This is perhaps an effect unknown or not easily conceived by those who possess no tenderness of conscience, and are not feelingly alive to the guilt which attaches to even the slightest violations of principle and propriety. But give us a man into whose heart there has entered such a sense of the law as to feel the discomfort of even the minutest aberration—whose force or whose delicacy of conscience are such, that what would bring no compunction into the hearts of other men is sure to overwhelm him with a conviction of guilt in its darkest imagery, and its most brooding and fearful anticipations—who figures himself to have fallen—perhaps irrecoverably, and that by a slip which—giving no concern to the feelings of ordinary mortals—would still leave them in possession of all the complacency and all the conscious uprightness that they ever had, or that they ever care for—we say of such a man, that if without help

and comfort from the gospel, the law—in all the strictness he sees to be in it—is all he has to deal with, he is positively in greater danger from the lesser delinquency into which he has fallen, than the other is from his transgression of tenfold enormity. For to him—so sensitive of guilt—it has been a more grievous surrender of principle; and to him—so tender of character—has there been the infliction of a sorer and more mortifying wound; and to him—so conversant in the sanctions and obligations of righteousness—does it look a more desperate overthrow, that he ever came to have forgotten them; and to him—so unbackneyed in the ways of transgression—will one distinct instance of it, however venial it may have looked to others, appear a vile and virulent apostasy. And thus, till the blood of Christ be felt in its cleansing and its peace-speaking power, may the man, from his very scrupulosity, be in hazard of abandoning himself in utter regardlessness to the habit of living forthwith without God, even as he now lives without hope in the world. The very exquisiteness of his moral sense furnishes sin with more frequent opportunities of inflicting upon him the humiliation of a defeat; and in the agony of that humiliation may he the more readily be led to give up the contest in despondency; and thus, such is the sad fatality of our condition under the law, that failing as we are sure to do in a perfect obedience to its requisitions, the more tremblingly alive we are to a sense of its obligations, the greater may be the advantage that sin has for plunging us into total and irretrievable discomfiture—thus turning the law into a provocative of sin, and through the weakness of our flesh, causing that to abound against which it has passed its most solemn and severe denunciations.

And even after the gospel has come in with its hopes and its assistances—this is a fact in our moral nature which may be turned to most important account in the great work of our sanctification. There can be no doubt that as that work prospers and makes progress the soul will become more delicately alive to the evil of sin; and so more liable to the paralyzing influences of humiliation and discouragement when sin, in however slight a degree, has obtained some advantage over it. Nothing will save it from apostasy, unless with the growing delicacy of its principles there be also a growing strength of performance—a growing watchfulness among the temptations which beset and may baffle it—a growing jealousy of itself, under the well-founded conviction that without Christ it can do nothing—a

growing habit of dependence upon Him, that He, meeting its faith by a stream of influences and spiritual nourishment out of His fulness, may indeed enable it to do all things. It is when the delicacy of moral and sacred feeling outstrips the efficacy of these practical expedients, that a foundation is laid for distress inconceivable, and perhaps the backslidings of a final and irretrievable apostasy; and hence it is, that instead of walking in presumptuous security it is the part of every honest and aspiring Christian who thinketh that he standeth, to take heed lest he fall; and never ought he, even to the last half-hour of his life, while it is his part to be ever on the alert in working out his salvation—never ought he to work it out in any other way than with fear and trembling.

While therefore we cannot evade the fact that the promulgation of a law has added to the world's guilt, and so afforded place for this reflection against God, that by a thing of His doing, even the delivery of this law, sin has been aggravated in the character and increased in the amount of it—yet how completely, we ask you to attend, is the imputed severity of this proceeding, in as far as you at least are concerned, done away by the express affirmation of the verse before us—that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. The antidote is an overmatch for the bane; and virulent as the disease may be there is a remedy provided, which is not merely competent for its utter extirpation, but by the applying of which there is obtained all the security of friendship with God, and all the joy of moral and spiritual healthfulness. It is indeed a sore tyranny of evil under which we lie oppressed. Sin is held forth as reigning—as seated on a throne—as fulfilling the will of a sovereign in accomplishing the work of destruction; for he reigneth unto death, and this is the final effect of his administration. What a wide and what a paramount authority then is he invested with—seeing that the individuals of each generation, and all the generations of the world, are the trophies of his power. One would think that the bodies which we wear might be borne up even as they are into heaven; and there have immortality stamped upon them. But no; sin has gotten an ascendancy over them, and the certainty while under this of their sinning, brings along with it the necessity of their dying. There is no other way, it would appear, in which this foul leprosy can be detached from that material constitution under which we lie cumbered and heavy-laden; and so the law of sin and of death is irreversible. There may from

another quarter a good and gracious principle descend upon us, by the operation of which the sin that dwelleth in these bodies is kept in check, and not suffered to have the dominion; but in the bodies themselves there is nought but corruption. "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." Its natural tendencies are all away from God and from goodness. Sin may not reign over the whole man, if there has been the accession to him by grace of that influence under which he is regenerated; but in that ingredient of the old man which is denominated *Flesh*—in all that he is by nature, or in all that mere nature ever can make of him, there is unmixed sinfulness: And therefore it is, that while the great object of contest on earth is to keep nature under subordination to the higher and the better principle that we receive by union with Christ Jesus, the repose of heaven will consist in our having got rid of this enemy by his utter dissolution—in our having been emancipated from that old framework which so encompassed us about with evil desires and evil tendencies—in our being conclusively delivered from a system on which Death had to lay his hand and resolve it into dust, ere the soul, translated into a glorious body, could without impediment and without a struggle expatiate in the full enlargement of its new and its holy nature.

Meanwhile Death reigns, and reigns universally. It has both a first and a second portion in all who obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ; and even with those who do obey, the body is all its own. So that in respect of that more visible and immediate sovereignty which addresses itself to the eye of the senses, it revels in all the glories of an undivided monarchy. And if Death be the mandate of Sin—if he be the executioner of this despot's will; and if, wherever he is seen to enter, it is upon an errand of subserviency to one in whose hands is the power of death—then what a universal lordship has he gotten, that not one family on the earth is to be found but has to weep under the bondage of this sore oppressor; and not a man who breathes on the face of our world—however firm his step and proud his attitude—who will not fall in prostrate helplessness under a doom from which there is no escaping. What a voucher for the holiness of God, and for the malignity of that sin which He hateth, that wherever it exists Death and Destruction go along with it—that on those men over whom sin prevails death both temporal and eternal is laid as a penalty; and that to those men with whom sin is present in their vile bodies though it has not

the dominion, death comes to release them from the plague—to strip them of their bodies as they would do of a garment spotted with infection, and cause them to undergo a cleansing process in their sepulchre: And it is indeed a striking testimony to the regal power and state of Sin, that he carries this sore fatality over the whole length and breadth of our species; and sitting enthroned over the destinies of man, makes universal spoil of our dying nature and holds it forth as the trophy of his greatness.

The honour of a king is concerned in upholding the integrity of his dominions, and in the keeping up of an unbroken authority over them; and hence may we conclude, from the expression of sin *reigning*, that if this imply regal power vested in a conscious and intelligent being, there is indeed a busy and an active interest at work against our species. And taking the Bible for our guide, there is a being who is said to have the power of death, and who is styled, from the high ascendancy to which he has arisen, the god of this world; and whom we recognise to be he of whom we read as the prince of the power of the air, and as the prince of the power of darkness; and who, seated as he is upon a throne, must feel that his glory is at stake on the perpetuity of that peculiar empire over which he is exalted: And hence the undoubted truth, that the might and the strenuousness and the ambitious desires of one most daring in enterprise, and most subtle in design, and most formidable in power and in resources, are all embarked on the object of our subjugation. The instrument of our overthrow is sin; and the result of it is, that second and everlasting death, the reign of which forms the domain of his rule and monarchy—and from the very expression of sin reigning, may we infer that a thirst for power, and the dread or the shame of a fallen majesty, are all at work in the heart of one who is busy in the plying of his devices, and most assiduous in the prosecution of them for the purpose of destroying us.

This looks abundantly menacing towards our helpless and degenerate race; but by the side of the expression that ‘sin reigneth unto death,’ let us point your regards to the counterpart expression of ‘grace reigning unto eternal life.’ And this, as in the former case, implies something more than a mere personification. It implies a living monarch—one who sits upon a rival throne—and who is intent upon an object directly and diametrically the reverse of that of his antagonist. In other words, if there be a kingly ambition which is against us, there

is a kingly ambition that is also upon our side. If it be the pride of one monarch to enslave our race, it is the dignity of another monarch to deliver us; and the desire of mighty potentates is thus embarked on a contest the issues of which are death or life to our species. We read of Jesus Christ as a King in Zion, and of His having come to destroy the works of the devil—even of him who has the power of death; and the glory of His character is surely linked with the success of His undertaking; and thus is our lower world the arena as it were of a contest which involves in it, not merely the future condition of those who live in it—but the renown of mighty combatants, who, arrayed in hostility against each other, are striving for the renown of victory.

Now it is not for the purpose of regaling your imaginations that we thus speak, but for the purpose of assuring and strengthening your faith. We want you to see how the majesty is as much concerned as the mercy of God, in the work of your redemption. We want you to feel how manifold are the guarantees of your deliverance if you will only flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the gospel. We want you to perceive how your safety and the honour of the great Mediator are most thoroughly at one. Do you think, that warring as He does with the great adversary of human souls He will ever permit him the triumph of a final victory over those who, cheered forward by His own invitation, are now trusting to His grace, and looking onward to the accomplishment of His promises? He hath graven upon an open and indelible record these memorable words, that whosoever believeth in Him shall be saved. Can you figure it then, that, on the great day of the winding up of the gospel economy—Satan will have it in his power to revile either the truth or ability of the Saviour; or to fasten upon an individual who believed in the Son of God, and yet whom the Son of God hath not rescued from the grasp of this destroyer? Jesus Christ hath embarked His own credit upon your salvation. Should any have faith in Him, and yet not be saved, He will not only fail in that which His heart is most assuredly set upon, but He will be foiled in His own enterprise, and that too by a most hateful and hated antagonist. The destruction of one who has faith were the degradation of Him who is the author and the finisher of faith; and hence an argument for your security in believing—for the perfect repose of that acquiescence wherewith you may lie down among the promises of the gospel—for

keeping firm and fast that confidence in which you have begun—seeing that grace has not only set out on a warfare against sin, but that grace is seated on a throne, and that the salvation of those who have been obedient to Heaven's call is essential to the truth of Heaven's voice and the triumph of Heaven's monarchy.

And a similar argument may be drawn from the clause of grace reigning *through righteousness*. It is this which forms the leading peculiarity of the evangelical dispensation. It is a dispensation of mercy, no doubt, but not of mercy simple and unaccompanied. It has more upon its aspect and character than the one expression of tenderness. There was compassion in the movement which then took place from Heaven to Earth; but this does not complete the history of the movement. It was compassion towards sinners; and God's righteous abhorrence of sin was mixed up with the forthgoings of His benevolent desire towards those who had been guilty of it. The boon of reconciliation descended upon the world; but it found its way through a peculiar medium, and that was a medium of righteousness—and to meet on our part this manifestation of the Godhead, it is not enough that we regard it in the light of mercy and nothing else—it will not be accepted that we rely on the general kindness and good-will of the Deity; but it is altogether indispensable to our safety, that while we rejoice in His grace we should receive it as a grace which has come to us through righteousness by Jesus Christ our Lord.

So that the sinner on entering into peace with God, does reverence to the purity of God; and when he draws upon the compassion of the divine nature, he renders homage to the holiness of the divine nature. Did he hold singly upon His compassion—then the truth which stood committed to the fulfilment of its denunciations, and the justice that had been offended by sin, would have been left without provision and without a safeguard. But the great Sacrifice has resolved all these difficulties; and you by depending not on the general attribute of mercy, but on the redemption that is through the blood of Jesus Christ, can, consistently with all the honours of the Divinity, obtain the forgiveness of all your trespasses. Out of the way of this consecrated mediatorship you will never meet the mercy of the Godhead—and in this way you will never miss it.

But such an economy is not only essential to the dignity of the Lawgiver; it serves to complete the security of the sinner.

It makes known to him, how God can be just while the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. It enables him to meet without dismay the whole aspect and character of God, in the full expression of all the attributes which belong to Him. It harmonizes the sterner with the gentler perfections of that Being with whom we have to do; and the sinner can now delight himself in the abundance of his peace—when he thinks that the very equity and unchangeableness of the Godhead are now upon his side. It does add to his confidence in the grace of the gospel when he views it as seated on a throne; and thus, in all its manifestations, holding forth the sovereignty of the Supreme Being. But it adds still more to his confidence when he views it as grace through righteousness; and thus holding forth the sacredness of the Supreme Being. He then sees no obstruction in the way of its reaching even unto him. The terrors of his guilty conscience give way when he perceives that the very attributes which without an atonement would have stood leagued in hostility against him—with an atonement form the best guarantees of his hope and safety. God now is not only merciful to forgive—He is faithful and just to forgive. He will not draw upon the surety and upon the debtor also. He will have a full reckoning with guilt; but He will not have more than a full reckoning, by exacting both a penalty and a propitiation: And the man who trusts to the propitiation may be very sure that the penalty will never reach him. The destroying angel, on finding him marked with the blood of Christ, will pass him by; and the agitated sinner who sought in vain for rest to the sole of his foot so long as the great peace-offering stood unrevealed to his conscience, and the tidings of an accepted sacrifice fell upon his ear without conviction and without efficacy, may, on the moment of his believing in the word of the testimony, feel how firm the transition is which he maketh from death unto life—when, through Him who died the just for the unjust, he now draws near unto God.

It finishes our exposition of this passage, when we point your eye to the great agent in the work of mediation. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life *by Jesus Christ our Lord*. He by His death bore the punishment that you should have borne. He by His obedience won a righteousness the reckoning and the reward of which are transferred unto you; and you, by giving credit to the good news, are deemed by God as having accepted of all these benefits, and will be dealt with accordingly.

You cannot trust too simply to the Saviour. You cannot place too strong a reliance on His death as your discharge. You are making the very use of Him that was intended, and do Him that honour wherewith He is most pleased, when you venture your all upon Him both for time and for eternity. We do not bid you earn a place in heaven—we do not bid you work for your forgiveness. We bid you receive it—we bid you hope for it; and eternal life will be the sure result of your thus receiving and thus hoping. Could we get you truly to rely, we are not afraid of licentiousness. Many see a lurking Antinomianism in the doctrine of faith. But where there is a true faith there is no Antinomianism. It has its fruit unto holiness here, and then everlasting life hereafter. But do try, ere you embark on that course of new obedience which leadeth to the final abode of holy and happy creatures—do try to have peace in your conscience with God. Do dwell on the simple affirmation which you meet with in the New Testament, of a Saviour who welcomes all sinners, and of a blood which cleanseth from all sin. Do let the terrors and the suspicion of guilt take their departure from your labouring bosom; and then, emptied of all that kept God at a distance from you, will there be room for those feelings and those principles which form the rudiments of the new creature in Jesus Christ our Lord. Love will cast out fear. Delight in God will take the place of dismay. The heart emancipated from bondage will rise freely and gratefully to Him in all the buoyancy of its new-felt enlargement. It will be found that the legal spirit, with its accompanying sensations of jealousy and disquietude and distrust, that this in fact is the mighty drag which keeps back the only obedience that is at all acceptable—the obedience of good-will. And the faith which we now urge upon you in all its strength and in all its simplicity, is not more the harbinger of peace to a sinner's heart, than it is the sure and unfailing germ of his progressive holiness.

LECTURE XXIX.

ROMANS VI. 1, 2.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

WE have ever been in the habit of regarding this chapter as the passage of greatest interest in the Bible—as that in which the greatest quantity of scriptural light is thrown on what to the eye of the general world is a depth and a mystery—even on that path of transition which leads from the imputed righteousness that is by faith, to the personal righteousness that is by new and spiritual obedience. We know not a single theme in the whole compass of Christianity on which there rests to the natural discernment a cloud of thicker obscurity, than that which relates to the origin and growth of a believer's holiness—nor is it seen how, after an immunity so ample for sin has been provided by an atonement of which the power is infinite as the Divinity Himself, there remaineth any inducement to obedience so distinct and palpable and certain of operation, as that which is offered by the law of 'Do this, and live'—a law that we are given to understand is now superseded by the gospel terms of 'Believe, and ye shall be saved.' It is of importance to know surely what were the first suggestions which arose in the apostolical mind, when met by what appears to be a most plausible and pertinent objection taken to the doctrine of grace, as if it led to licentiousness; or to the doctrine of a free and full remission of sin, as if it encouraged the disciple to a secure and wanton perseverance in all its practices. In the apostle's reply to this, we might expect those ligaments to be made bare to our view, by which justification and sanctification are bound together in constant and inseparable alliance; and in virtue of which it is, that a sinner both feels himself secure from the penalty of sin and keeps himself most strenuously and fearfully aloof from the performance of it.

We have already said that it was of use to mark the recur-

rence of similar phrases in the train of the apostle's reasoning, as it may serve to mark the connexion of its distant parts, and thus to afford a more commanding view of his whole argument. We have no doubt that the question of this verse—"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"—was prompted by a recently written sentence in the preceding chapter, the very cadence of which seemed to be still alive in the apostle's memory—"Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." It is well to trace the continuity of Scripture, broken and disjointed as it is by the artificial division that has been made of it into chapters and verses—to read the letter of an inspired writer as you would read the letter of an ordinary acquaintance, not in sheets but as an entire composition through which there possibly runs the drift of one prevailing conception which he aims to establish; and thus it is that we think to have profited by the perusal of those editions of the Bible which vary from the one that is current by the simple device of omitting the verses, and casting it like any ordinary book into sections and paragraphs. But the possession of the Bible in such a form is by no means indispensable. In reading the Bibles that you have, be aware of the concatenation that we now speak of; and let it not be frittered away on your minds by those mechanical breaks through which, to a listless peruser of Holy Writ, the sense is often interrupted. In guarding against the disadvantage which has just been specified, you will be led to the habit of comparing Scripture with Scripture—a habit which, if accompanied by that divine illumination without which even the Bible itself is made up of bare and barren literalities, will be altogether tantamount to that habit of the apostle through which he became a proficient in the wisdom that the Holy Ghost teacheth—even the habit of comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

Ver 2.—'God forbid.'—Let us here bid you remark the prompt, decisive, and unhesitating reply of the apostle to the question wherewith he introduces this chapter. Paul has by way of eminence been called the apostle of justification. By no other has the doctrine of pardon, as held out in free dispensation on the one hand and as received by simple trust upon the other, been more fully and zealously vindicated. Heaven, instead of coming to the sinner through the medium of wages and work, is made to come to him through the medium of a gift and an acceptance. One would think from his representation of the matter, that salvation was brought to the door of a sinner's

bosom, nay, even pressing against it for admittance; and that you have simply to open the door, and by an act of sufferance to allow its ingress, and thus to feed upon it and rejoice. God, the offended party, beseeches the transgressor to be reconciled; and it is when the transgressor pleases to yield consent and compliance with this entreaty that the act of reconciliation is struck, and an agreement is entered upon. All this is implied in the preceding argument of the apostle, and in the terms of constant recurrence that he employs during the prosecution of it. The tenure upon which eternal life is given, and upon which it is held under the economy of the gospel—is made abundantly manifest by such phrases as ‘grace,’ and ‘free grace,’ and ‘justification by faith and not of works,’ and the ‘gift of righteousness’ on the one hand, and the ‘receiving of the atonement’ on the other. And yet the apostle, warm from the delivery of these intimations, and just discharged of the tidings of a sinner’s impunity if he will, and within a single breath of having uttered that where there was abundance of guilt there was a superabundance of grace in store for it—when met by the question of—What then? shall we do more of this sin, that we may draw more of this grace? is ready at the warning of a single moment with a most clear and emphatic negative. And he gives his affirmation before he gives his argument upon the subject. On his simple authority as a messenger from God, he enters his solemn caveat against the continuance of sin—so that should you understand not his reasoning, you may at least be fully assured of the truth, that lavish and liberal as the gospel is of its forgiveness for the past, it has no toleration either for the purposes or for the practices of sin in future.

Couple this verse with the one that we have recently alluded to; and you make out, from the simple change of tense, as you pass from the one to the other, two of the most important lessons of Christianity. By the first verse we are told that where sin abounded grace did much more abound. By the second we are resolved as to the question, ‘Shall I continue in sin that grace may abound?’ with the decisive and unqualified answer of—No, most assuredly. With the first of these verses we feel ourselves warranted to offer the fullest indemnity to the worst and most worthless among you, for all the offences, however many and however aggravated, of your past history. We know not what the measure of your iniquity may have been. We are not privy to the scenes of profligacy and lawless abandonment through

which you may have passed. We are not in the secret of any of those foul atrocities wherewith the perhaps now agonized memory of some hearer is charging him. We cannot take the dimensions of the crime and the carelessness and the ungodliness of those years that have now rolled over you; but whatever these dimensions may be, we are entitled to proclaim an element of surpassing magnitude, that will pluck the sting out of this sore moral distemper, and most effectually neutralize it. Your sin has abounded, and if you feel aright your conscience will re-echo our affirmation—‘but the grace of God has much more abounded.’ Be assured, every one who is now present, that there is no sin into which he has ever fallen that is beyond the reach of the great gospel atonement—no guilt of so deep and inveterate a dye that the blood of a crucified Saviour cannot wash it away. It is thus that we would cheer and brighten the retrospect of every sinner’s contemplations. It is thus that we would cast the offer and assurance of pardon over the whole extent of the life that has passed away; and arresting you at this point of your personal history, at which we are pouring forth our present utterance in your hearing—I would say, “Come now and let us reason together; though your sins were as scarlet they shall become as wool, though they were as crimson they shall be made white as snow.”

But the sinner, from the station that he at this moment occupies, has not merely to look back—he should also look forward, and hold up the light of the gospel, not merely to the region of memory which he has already travelled, but also to the region of anticipation on which he is entering. And let it never be forgotten by you, ye men who are now in earnestness and thoughtful inquiry, and for aught we know may be at the very turning-point of your eternal salvation—forget not, we say, that the same gospel which sheds an oblivion over all the sinfulness of your past lives, enters upon a war of extermination against all your future sinfulness. You have not yet come under its economy at all, if you have not embarked on the struggle of all your powers and all your purposes with the power of iniquity over you—nor would we say of you on the one hand that grace has abounded unto the forgiveness of sin, unless we saw in you on the other an honest and determined habit of exertion against the continuance of sin. We may not be able to follow the apostle in his argument; but we may at least take up his affirmation. Whether or not we shall see the intermediate steps of that pro-

cess through which a sinner is conducted from the sense of his reconciliation with God to the strenuousness of a conflict that is unremitting against all iniquity—yet may we be very sure, from the averment before us, that such actually is the process; and that such, in the case of every real believer, is the personal and the practical result of it. And not more surely does the gospel cast a veil over the transgressions by which the retrospect of your history is deformed, than, in some way or other, it sends forth a sanative influence by which to restrain transgression throughout the remainder of your pilgrimage in the world.

Ver. 2.—Yet we should like to know the intervening steps by which a sinner is led onwards from his justification to his sanctification; and more especially when we find that curiosity in this matter is warranted by the apostle himself leading the way in a train of argumentation which he presents throughout the whole line of the chapter before us. To follow the apostle with a view thoroughly to understand his reasoning upon this subject, is not surely any attempt on our part to be wise above that which is written, but rather the altogether fair and legitimate attempt to be wise up to that which is written. And we repeat that we know of no track in the field of Christianity more hidden from the general eye, and yet of more big and eventful importance in the history of every believer, than that by which he is carried onward from the remission of his sin to the renewal of his soul—and so is made to exemplify the walk of one who feels himself to be secure against the punishment of sin, and yet sets himself in the attitude of determined and unsparing warfare against its power.

It is altogether essential to our understanding the sense of the apostle's argument, that we find the import of the phrase 'dead unto sin,' and it so happens that it admits of a twofold interpretation, which might serve to bewilder us, did not each of them suggest an argument against our continuance in sin, that is in every way accordant with some of the plainest and most unambiguous passages in the New Testament.

The term 'dead,' in the phrase 'dead unto sin,' may be understood forensically—in which case it is not meant that we are dead in fact, but dead in law; or it may be understood personally, in which case the being dead unto sin will mean that we are dead thereunto in our affections for it—that we are no longer alive to the power of its allurements, but that in virtue of the appetites of our sensitive frame being mortified to the pleasures

which are but for a season, we sin not as we wont, just because the incitements to sin have not the power they wont to seduce us unto the ways of disobedience.

It may be remarked ere we proceed farther, that many commentators understand this phrase according to the latter explanation; yet the former we think ought not to be overlooked, as it involves a principle most true and important in itself, and brings out an argument against our continuance in sin, which is in most striking harmony with one of the most explicit and memorable quotations that can be educed from the whole compass of the Sacred Volume.

To understand forensically the phrase that we are dead unto sin, is to understand that for sin we are dead in law. The doom of death was upon us on account of sin, and we were in the condition of malefactors on whom capital sentence had been pronounced, and who were now in that place of imprisonment from whence they were shortly to be led forth to execution. Conceive that the whole amount of the punishment for sin was the simple annihilation of the sinner—that just as under a civil government a criminal is often put to death for the vindication of its authority and for the removal of a nuisance from society, so, let it be imagined that under the jurisprudence of Heaven, an utter extinction of being was laid upon the sinner, both for the purpose of maintaining in respect and authority Heaven's law, and also for the purpose of removing a nuisance and a contamination from the great spiritual family. Let us further imagine, not merely that the sentence is pronounced, but that the sentence is executed; that the life of the transgressor is taken away; and that, by an act of extermination reaching to the soul as well as to the body, the whole light of consciousness is put out, and he is expunged altogether from the face of God's animated creation. There could be no misunderstanding of the phrase if, when in speaking of this individual after all this had befallen him, you were to say that he was dead unto or dead for sin; and such an announcement regarding him were just as distinctly intelligible, as when you tell of one who has undergone the capital sentence of the law, that he was one who for his crimes had suffered execution.

It is conceivable, after such a catastrophe, that God may have devised a way by which, in consistency with His own character and with all the purposes of His government, He might remake and reanimate the creature who had undergone this infliction—

might assemble the particles of his now dissipated materialism into the same body as before, and might infuse into it a spirit, on which He shall stamp the very same identical consciousness as before, and thus introduce at once again within that universe of life where it went to expatiate. The phrase 'we are dead unto sin' might still adhere to us, though now alive from the dead. It had been still our rightful sentence, and we would still have been lying under it, had not some expedient been fallen upon, or some equivalent been rendered, in virtue of which it is that we have been recalled from the chambers of dark nonentity, and been made to break forth again upon a peopled scene of sense and intelligence and feeling. And in these circumstances is it for us to continue in sin—we who for sin were consigned to annihilation, and have only by the kindness of a Saviour been rescued from it—is it for us to repeat that thing of whose malignity we have had in our own persons such a dreadful experience? Is it for us, on whom the blow of God's insulted and provoked authority has so tremendously fallen, and who under its force would still, but for a Redeemer's interference, have been profoundly asleep in the womb of nothingness—is it for us again to brave the displeasure of that God whose hatred of sin is as unchangeable as His sacredness is unchangeable? Above all, is it for us, who have had such recent demonstration of the antipathies that subsist between sin and holiness—is it for us, who experimentally know that under the government of the one there can be no harbour and no toleration for the other—is it for us, who have learned from our own history that sin is not permitted so much as to breathe within the limits of God's beloved family, and that to keep it clear of a scandal so foul and so enormous He roots up every plant and specimen that is stained by it—is it for us, who have thus once been rooted up and once been swept away, but by the stretching forth of a mediatorial hand have again been summoned to the being and the birthright we formerly had in the inheritance of children—is it for us to repeat that abomination which is as uncongenial to the whole tone and spirit of the Divinity now as ever; and will remain as offensive to His eye, and as utterly irreconcilable to His nature through all eternity?

Now the argument retains its entireness, though the Mediator should interfere with His equivalent ere the penalty of death has been inflicted—though instead of drawing them out of the pit of destruction, He by ransom should deliver them from going

down into that pit—though, instead of suffering them to die for their sins and then reviving them from their state of annihilation, He should Himself die for them: and they, freed from the execution of the sentence, should be continued in that life of which they had incurred the forfeiture. Still they were dead in law. To die was their rightful doom, though this doom was borne by another, and so borne away from them. Had they actually died for sin, and by the services of a Mediator been brought alive again—the argument would have been, How shall we who died for sin, now that we live, continue in that which is so incompatible with the divine government, that wherever it exists it behoves by death to be swept away? And the argument is just as strong though the services of the Mediator are applied sooner, and are of effect to prevent the death instead of recovering from it. Such is the malignity of sin, that under its operation, we would have been blotted out from the living universe—such is the sacredness of God that sin cannot exist within the precincts of His loving-kindness; and so we, who lay under its condemnation, would, but for a Redeemer's services, have been deposed from our standing in creation. We were as good as dead, for the sentence had gone forth and was coming—in sure aim and fatality—on our devoted persons, when Christ stepped between, and, suffering it to light upon Himself, carried it away. And shall we, who because of sin were then on the point of extermination from a scene for which sin had unfitted us—shall we continue in sin after an escape had been thus made good for us? Shall we do that thing the doing of which would have been our death, had it not been for a redeeming process whereby life was preserved to us; and is it at all conceivable that this redemption would have been wrought for the very purpose of upholding us in that very sin which made our redemption necessary?

To use the term 'dead' in a forensic meaning is not a gratuitous or unauthorized interpretation on our part. We have the example of Paul himself for it, in that memorable passage of First Corinthians where he says, "We thus judge, that as Christ died for all, then were all dead"—not personally dead—not dead in regard of affection for what was sinful, but dead in law—dead in respect of that sure condemnation, which but for Christ would have been fulfilled upon all—not executed but on the eve of execution: and whether the Saviour prevent the accomplishment of the sentence or revive and restore them after it, the argument of the apostle is the same. Christ by dying—

and that to preserve them from dying—did as much for them as if He had brought them back again from the chambers of death—as if He had put life into them anew, after it was utterly extinguished—as if He had placed them once again within the limits of God's family, and given them a second standing on the platform of life from which sin had before swept them off. It is making Christ the author of our life, which He is as effectually by preventing its extermination as He would have been by infusing it anew into us after it was destroyed; and the practical lesson comes out as impressively in the one case as in the other—even that we should give up the life to Him who thus has kept or who thus has recalled it, or that we should live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and who rose again.

We trust you may now perceive how impressive the consideration is on which we are required to give up sin under the economy of the gospel. For sin we were all under sentence of death. Had the sentence taken effect we would all have been outcasts from God's family. Sin is that scandal which must be rooted out from that great spiritual household over which the Divinity rejoices—so that on its very first appearance an edict of expulsion went forth, and men became exiles from the domain of Almighty favour, just because they were sinners. It is conceivable that the sentence might be arrested, or that it might be recalled; but it were strange indeed, if, after being doomed to exile because they had been sinners, they should cease to be exiles and be sinners still. Strange administration indeed, for sin to be so hateful to God as to lay all who had incurred it under death—and yet when readmitted into life that sin should be permitted, and what was before the object of destroying vengeance should now become the object of an upheld and protected toleration. Everything done and arranged by God bears upon it the impress of His character. And it was indeed fell demonstration of His antipathy to sin under the first arrangement of matters between Him and the species, that when it entered our world the doom of extermination from all favour and fellowship with God should instantly go forth against it. And now that the doom is taken off—think you it possible that the unchangeable God has so given up His antipathy to sin, as that man—ruined and redeemed man—may now perseveringly indulge under the new arrangement, in that which under the old arrangement destroyed him? Does not the God who loved

righteousness and hated iniquity six thousand years ago, bear the same love to righteousness and the same hatred to iniquity still? And may not the sinner well say—If on my own person such a dreadful memorial of God's hatred to sin was on the eve of being inflicted, as that of everlasting destruction from His presence,—if the awfulness of such a vindictive manifestation was about to be realized on me individually, when a great Mediator interposed, and standing between me and God, bare in His own body the whole brunt of His coming vengeance,—if when thus kept from the destruction which sin drew upon me, and so as good as if rescued from that abyss of destruction into which sin had thrown me, I now breathe the air of loving-kindness from Heaven, and can walk before God in peace and graciousness—Shall I again attempt the incompatible alliance of two principles so adverse as that of an approving God and a persevering sinner, or again try the Spirit of that Being who in the whole process of my condemnation and my rescue has given such proof of most sensitive and unspotted holiness?

There shall be nothing, says God, to hurt or to offend in all my holy mountain. It is in conformity to this that death is inflicted upon the sinner; and this death is neither more nor less than his expulsion from the family of holiness. Through Jesus Christ we come again unto Mount Zion, which is the heavenly Jerusalem; and it is as fresh as ever in the verdure of a perpetual holiness. How shall we who were found unfit for residence in this place because of sin, continue in sin after our readmittance therein? How shall we, recovered from so awful a catastrophe, continue that which first involved us in it; or again take on that disease which has already evinced itself to be of such virulence as to be a disease unto death?

LECTURE XXX.

ROMANS VI. 3-7.

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.”

VER. 3, 4.—The original meaning of the word ‘baptism’ is immersion, and though we regard it as a point of indifference whether the ordinance so named be performed in this way or by sprinkling, yet we doubt not that the prevalent style of the administration in the apostle’s days was by an actual submerging of the whole body under water. We advert to this for the purpose of throwing light on the analogy that is instituted in these verses. Jesus Christ by death underwent this sort of baptism—even immersion under the surface of the ground, whence He soon emerged again by His resurrection. We by being baptized into His death are conceived to have made a similar translation—in the act of descending under the water of baptism to have resigned an old life, and in the act of ascending to emerge into a second or a new life—along the course of which it is our part to maintain a strenuous avoidance of that sin which as good as expunged the being that we had formerly; and a strenuous prosecution of that holiness which should begin with the first moment that we were ushered into our present being, and be perpetuated and make progress toward the perfection of full and ripened immortality.

‘Baptized into his death’—or regarding ourselves as if like Him we had actually been slain and buried, and like Him brought forth anew and made alive again before that God who for our sins had swept us beyond the circle of His favoured creation. This would have been had not Christ died; and though He by pouring out His soul for us has kept us in the favour that else would have been forfeited and that for ever—yet the argu-

ment is the same, if prevented from going down into the pit, as if after being cast headlong into it for our sins we had again been extricated therefrom. How shall we, whom sin had at that time blotted out from the family of life, now that we are readmitted, again indulge in it? How shall we run counter to those holy antipathies of the divine nature, of the strength and irreconcilableness of which we already in our own persons have had so fell a manifestation? How shall we, rescued from destruction, again welcome to our embraces the destroyer?—or, living anew under the eye of that God who could not endure the presence of sin, and so consigned it to the exile of death everlasting, shall we live again in that very course which made our former existence so offensive to Him and so incompatible with the whole spirit and design of His government? Has He changed His taste or His character? or makes it any difference to the argument, that a Mediator interposed and took upon Himself the whole weight of that avenging arm which was lifted up for our extermination? Is not the exhibition of God's hatred and hostility to sin just as impressive, that the stroke of jealousy fell upon the head of His own Son, as it would have been had it fallen on the guilty millions whom this mighty Captain shielded from the vindictive discharge that else would have overwhelmed us? And whether these billows of wrath have all been broken on the Rock of our Salvation, or first made to pass over us, we had again been summoned from the depth and caused to emerge anew into the sunshine of God's reconciled countenance—does it not equally prove that He, the everlasting enemy of sin, will, in any new economy that He may institute, still evince it to be that hateful thing for which He has no taste, and can have no toleration?

So much for the application of the phrase 'dead unto sin,' when understood forensically. We trust that however imperfectly we may have illustrated this part of the argument, you have been made to perceive that there is in it the force and the power of a most impressive consideration; and whether you have seized upon it or not, be at least very sure of this, that—such is the fact of the matter—there is no indulgence for sin under the dispensation of the gospel. It is a restorative dispensation, by which you are alike kept from the penalty of sin and cured of its polluting virulence. It restores you to the favour of God, but it restores you not to the liberty of sinning; and the argument wherewith we would arm and fortify the principles of

all who now feel themselves alive in Christ Jesus is—shall I continue in that hateful thing which would have brought me to the death, had not my Saviour, for my deliverance and preservation, bowed down His head unto the sacrifice?

We have already tried to set forth in your hearing the forensic interpretation that might be given of the phrase '*dead unto sin*'—dead for sin—not that the sentence was inflicted, but that the sentence was pronounced; and the argument why they should not continue in sin is as strongly applicable to those who are delivered from a doom that was impending, as to those who are recalled from a doom that was actually executed. There were a most direct force in the consideration—should a revived criminal press it upon his moral feelings—how can I recur to that which is so odious in the sight of my country's government, that I had to suffer a death for it, from which I—perhaps by a miracle of mercy—have been restored? And it ought to be as powerful a consideration with a reprieved criminal, whose sentence has been suspended, and perhaps by the intercession of a mediator been finally withdrawn. The recurrence to that which brought down the sentence were just as monstrous a violence done to the whole spirit and object of the administration under which I live, in the one case as in the other; and be assured that there were the very same violence done to the spirit of Heaven's administration—should those who are redeemed from death under the economy of the gospel, live in that which had sunk them under so fearful a condemnation. For sin we were ready to die. For sin we would have died had not Christ interposed, and undergone in His own person that shedding of blood without which remission is impossible. The demonstration given of God's antipathies to the power and existence of sin in His kingdom, is as strong by the falling of the deadly blow upon the head of a mediator, as if it had fallen direct on the head of those for whom He died. And shall we from whom the stroke of vengeance has been averted—shall we who are still in life, but virtually in a life from the dead—shall we who in Christ may so read what but for Him would have happened to ourselves as to be baptized into His death and to be planted together in the likeness of it—shall we, kept from falling into the abyss of condemnation, and therefore as good as if summoned again from its depths on the platform of God's favoured and rejoicing family—continue in that hateful thing which but for Christ would have destroyed us, and of God's abhorrence to

which the atoning death of Christ gives so awful and impressive a manifestation?

But while we have thus insisted on the forensic interpretation of the phrase 'dead unto sin'—yet let us not forbear to urge the personal sense of it, as implying such a deadness of affection to sin, such an extinction of the old sensibility to its allurements and its pleasures, as that it has ceased from its wonted power of ascendancy over the heart and character of him who was formerly its slave. We think that this sense too was in the mind of the apostle; and that he speedily takes it up in the prosecution of his argument. But we are rather induced to believe that he starts his argument with the phrase understood forensically—that out of the premisses already established he gathers an immediate and very powerful dissuasive against the continuance of the believer in sin—that, without assuming as yet any revolution of desire on his part, he plies him with a question which ought by its moral influence to work such a revolution, and a question too that emanates directly from the truth about which the apostle had just been previously employed, even that Christ died for us; or in other words, that we, under a rightful sentence of death, had yet been suffered to live by the transference of the doom upon the person of another. And shall we in these circumstances persist in doing the very thing that had brought that doom upon us?—a very pertinent question most assuredly at this stage of his reasoning; and a question which, did it tell with the impression it ought on the heart of a disciple, would lead him to abjure sin; and so from the thought that he was dead unto it forensically, would it conduct him to the reality of being dead unto it actually and habitually and personally.

But you will surely perceive that to bring about this effect something more is necessary than merely to address to the corrupt mind of man some new moral suasion that had never been brought to bear upon it. We are not aware that it lies within the influence of any argument to deaden the appetites of nature for that which is sinful. It is true that in consequence of what Christ hath done, a new topic and a new suggestion can be offered to the sinner, which had Christ not done, could not have been urged upon him at all. But we fear that it is not enough to bring argument however powerful from without, whereby to assail the feelings and propensities of the human heart—that additional to the great outward transaction of Christ's atoning death, from which we have endeavoured to fetch a persuasive

for turning from all iniquity, there must be also an inward operation upon every disciple, ere the persuasive can be so listened to as to be practically effectual: or in other words—as through what Christ hath done for us we are forensically dead unto sin, so that we may be regarded as having already undergone the curse in Him—so, there must also be a something done in us, a personal change wrought, a deadening process undergone, whereby sin is no longer of power over us.

Now though this be the work of the Spirit, yet the Spirit accommodates His work to the nature of the subject upon which He is employed. He treats man as a rational and intelligent being. It is not by the resistlessness of a blind impulse that He carries any given effect on the desires of the heart, but by making man see what is desirable, and then choose it, and then labour after it with all the strenuousness of a willing and purposing and acting creature. He does not become personally dead unto sin, or personally alive unto righteousness, save by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Yet this operation is not a simple fiat, by which the transition is brought about without the steps of such a process as marks the judgment and the feeling and the conscience, and the various other mental faculties of him who is made to undergo this great regeneration. Agreeably to the language of our Shorter Catechism, though this be the work of God's Spirit, yet it is a work whereby He convinces and He enlightens the mind, and He renews the will, and He persuades to that which is right, and He enables for the performance of it. Let us endeavour, if possible, to trace the succession of those moral influences by which man under the gospel is conducted from the natural state of being alive to sin and to the world, to the state of being dead unto these things and alive unto God.

Ver. 5, 6.—We are planted together in the likeness of His death.—By His death He bore the curse of a violated law, and now it has no further charge against Him. He acquitted Himself to the full of all its penalties; and now He is for ever exempted from any future reckoning with a creditor whom He has conclusively set aside—and that because He has completely satisfied him. He is now that immortal Vine, who stands for ever secure and beyond the reach of any devouring blight from the now appeased enemy; and we who by faith are united with Him as so many branches, share with Him in this blessed exemption. We have as good as had the sentence of death

discharged upon us already. In Christ our propitiation we have rendered the executor all his dues. In Him our Surety we have paid a debt for which we can no longer be craved or reckoned with. And here we are like unto Christ, in that we are as secure from the visitation of the great penalty as if we had borne it ourselves—in that as with Him the hour and the power of darkness have now passed away, never again to go over Him, so we—just as if we had undergone the same trial and the same baptism—come forth acquitted of all our trespasses, and the hand of the avenging adversary shall never reach us.

And as we thus share in His death, so shall we also share in His resurrection. From the humiliation of the grave He arose to the heights of sublimest glory. By what He hath borne in our stead we now stand as exempted from punishment as if we had borne it ourselves. By what He hath done of positive obedience in our stead, He hath not only been highly exalted in His own person, but He hath made us the partakers of His exaltation, to the rewards of which we shall be promoted as if we had rendered the obedience ourselves. And it is thus that we understand the being planted together with Him in the likeness of His death, and the being planted together with Him in the likeness of His resurrection.

The sixth verse we think ushers in the transition from the forensic to the personal. By being 'dead unto sin' we understand that we are spoken of as in the condition of having already undergone the penalty of death, and so being acquitted of this great penal consequence of sin. We get into this condition not by actually suffering the death, but—as it is expressed in the third verse, by being baptized unto the death of Christ, and so as in the fourth verse by being buried with Him in this baptism, and in the fifth verse planted together with Him in the likeness of His death—all indicative of our being forensically dealt with on account of Christ's death, just as if we ourselves had undergone the suffering which for us He hath endured. And we would even carry this style of interpretation to the first clause of the sixth verse, and understand—by the old man being crucified with Him, that the sinner is now to be reckoned with just as if in his own person he had sustained the adequate punishment of that guilt for which Christ rendered the adequate expiation. And all this however for a posterior end—all this for a purpose specified in the remaining part of the verse now under consideration—all this for the achievement of such a personal

change upon the believer, as that in him the body of sin might at length be altogether destroyed, and that henceforth, or from the moment of his becoming a believer, he might not serve sin.

This tallies with another part of the Bible, where it is said that Christ gave Himself up for us—suffered in our stead—died the death that legally impended over us, so that the sentence is as much over and away from us as if it had been inflicted on our own persons; this He did for an end even posterior to that of our deliverance from condemnation—for an end analogous to the one stated in the verse before us—even that the body of sin might be destroyed, and that we should not serve sin; or, as we have it in the passage now referred to, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Now where, it may be asked, is the connexion? How comes it that because we are partakers in the crucifixion of Christ, so that the law has no further severity to discharge upon us—how comes it that this should have any effect in destroying the body of sin, or in emancipating us from the service of sin? Whence is it that exoneration from the penalty should lead to emancipation from the power? What is the hidden tie that conducts the believer from being forensically dead unto sin to his being also personally dead unto sin? How is it that the fact of his being acquitted leads to the fact of his being sanctified? and what is the precise nature of that step which conducts from the pardon of a reconciled to the purity of a regenerated creature?

There can be no doubt that the Spirit of God both originates and carries forward the whole of this process. He gives the faith which makes Christ's death as available for our deliverance from guilt as if we had suffered the death in our own persons; and He causes the faith to germinate all those moral and spiritual influences which bring about the personal transformation that we are inquiring of. But these He does in a way that is agreeable to the principles of our rational nature; so that His agency does not supersede the question—how is it that a belief on our part that we are so far partakers of the death of Christ as to partake in the deliverance which it hath wrought from the guilt of sin—how is it that this belief destroys the being of sin upon our persons, and releases us from that slavery in which nature is held to its allurements and its charms?

We apprehend one way of it to be through the expulsive power of a new affection to dispossess an old one from the heart.

You cannot destroy your love of sin by a simple act of extermination. You cannot thus bid away from your bosom one of its dearest and oldest favourites. Our moral nature abhors the vacuum that would be formed by an old affection taking its departure from the chambers of the inner man without any new affection to succeed it. The former favourite will retain his place and his ascendancy there till he is supplanted by a new one, ready to take up his room, and to give the sensation of full and well-liked company—so as not to leave the heart in a state of dreary and woful abandonment. It is thus that the man who feels his only portion to be on earth, and that heaven is hopelessly beyond his reach, resigns himself to the full and undivided sway of earthly affections. He cannot bid them away from him. They cleave to him with a tenacity and a power of adherence that nothing but the mastery of a new affection can possibly overcome; and whence—if heaven is impregvably shut against him—whence can he fetch the instrument that will drive out the legion of earthly feelings and earthly desires and earthly idolatries which now lord it over him, and have established the empire and tyranny of sin within the confines of his moral and spiritual nature? Let it be his feeling that heaven is unattainable, and this will chill and discourage within him all longing for the enjoyments that are there—so that his love of the enjoyments which are here will keep undisturbed possession of his soul, and give the character and the colour of atheism to all its movements. He will live without God in the world; and never till the favour of God be made accessible to him—never till the joys of the upper Paradise are placed within his reach—never till the barrier be thrown down which defends his approaches to the happy world that lies in the distant futurity away from him—never till then will the powers of the world that is to come carry it over the pleasures of the world that is present, and by which he is immediately surrounded. The old affections will cleave and keep their obstinate and undisputed hold, just because the proper engine is not brought into contact with the heart, and which can alone avail for the dispossession of them. They will not give way at a simple mandate from the chair of reason or philosophy; and nothing can expel them from the bosom but the powerful and victorious rivalry of new affections sent into the heart from new objects placed within the grasp either of certain or of possible attainment.

Now the death of Christ is the breaking down of the else in-

superable barrier. It has fetched other objects from afar, and placed them within the attainment of sinful man, and presented them to his free choice, and brought the delights of eternity to his very door—so that if he just have faith to perceive them, he is brought into the very condition which by the bias of his moral and sentient nature is most favourable to the extinction of old appetites—and that just by the intruding and dispossessing power of a new one. The things that are above now lie at his door for acceptance, and are urgently soliciting admittance within the repositories of his heart, and we may now bid him set his whole affection on the things that are above—which if he does, like the rod of Aaron it will swallow up all his subordinate and earthly desires, and he will henceforth cease to set his affections upon the things that are beneath. Only let him by faith look upon himself as crucified with Christ, and then he will have got over that wall of separation which stood between him and a joyful immortality. That spiritual and everlasting death which is the natural doom of every sinner is now as good as traversed and got over by him—for in the person of his dying Saviour with whom he stands associated in the whole power and effect of His atonement, he has already borne the whole weight of this condemnation; and there is now nothing between him and that heaven, all the felicities and glories of which have now entered into competition with the world and its evanescent gratifications. It is thus that the world is disarmed of its power of sinful temptation. It is thus that the cross of Christ crucifies the world unto you and you unto the world. It is thus that sin receives its death-blow, by its old mastery over the heart being dethroned and done away through the still more commanding mastery of other affections which it is now competent for man to have, because the objects of them are now placed within the reach of his attainment. It is thus that the cross of Christ, by the same mighty and decisive stroke wherewith it has moved the curse of sin away from us, also moves away the power and the love of sin from over us. And we no longer mind earthly things, just because better things are now within our offer, and our conversation is in heaven—whence we also look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is in perfect analogy with other and most familiar exhibitions of our nature, in the scenes of business and ordinary affairs. Let us just conceive a man embarked, with full and earnest ambition, on some humble walk of retail merchandise—

whose mind is wholly taken up through the year with the petty fluctuations that are taking place in prices and profits and customers, but who nevertheless is regaled on the annual examination of particulars at the end of it, with the view of some snug addition to his old accumulations. You can figure how the heart of such a man may be engrossed with the play of all those anxieties and feelings and mental appetites which are incidental to such a condition—how wedded he is to his own little concern—how watchful of the turns and movements that may affect its prosperity—and withal how complacently he cherishes the anticipation of that decent competency which forms the all that he has learned to aspire after. You must see how impossible it were to detach the affections of this individual from the objects and the interests of this his favourite course by a simple demonstration of their vanity, and with what moral tenacity he would cleave to the pursuits of his present gainfulness, and what a mighty and peculiar force were necessary to disengage him from the operations of that counter over which there was unceasingly kept up the most agreeable play that was within the reach of his ever arriving at. But just suppose that in some way or other this reach were greatly extended, and either some splendid property or some sublime walk of high and hopeful adventure, were placed within his attainment, and the visions of a far more glorious affluence were to pour a light into his mind which greatly overpassed and so eclipsed all the fairness of those homelier prospects that he went to indulge in—is it not clear to all your discernments that the old affection which he could never get rid of by simple annihilation will come to be annihilated, and that merely by giving place to the new one—that the field of employment from which no force could have torn him, he now willingly abandons, and that just for the more alluring field on which he has been invited to enter—that the meaner ambition has now disappeared from his bosom, and just because the loftier ambition has overborne it—that the game in which he aspired after hundreds is now given over, and just because a likelier game of many thousands has enticed him away from it—that the worship he formerly rendered to an idol of brass is now renounced, and just because seduced from it by the superior fascination of that worship which he is now rendering to an idol of gold? Do you not see from this, how it is that the higher idolatry has superseded the lower, and also how it is that both idolatries are to be extinguished—how it is that if we

had only faith to realize the magnificence of eternity, and to believe that through the death of Christ the portal was now opened to its blessedness and its glory, that this would deaden all our worldliness together—not merely laying one species of earthly ambition by the lighting up of another, but disposing of all by the paramount importance of an object that greatly surpassed all, and so absorbed all? Does not this throw explanation on the mystery of sin being slain in its influences simply by a believing view on our part of sin slain in its curse and condemnation; and how, after all, the mighty instrument for achieving our deliverance from the power of things seen and sensible is our confidence in the efficacy of that death which has opened up for us access to things eternal—so as to make this the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith?

And this illustration, by the way, may help to show how the gospel can do what the law cannot do. Were the humble trafficker asked to purchase for himself some place of occupancy and lucrative partnership on that higher course where merchants are called princes and are held to be the honourable of the earth—it is likely that the consciousness of utter inability for the enterprise would confine all his ambitious tendencies within the sphere that he already moved in, and lead him to lavish as before every energy and affection that belonged to him on the scene of his present hopes and present anxieties. But instead of the place being sold, were the place *given* to him—were he freely and gratuitously offered admission to it with all the flattery of its thriving channels and splendid anticipations—there were then a moving power to disenchant him from all his present affections, in the thing held forth to him as a gift, which it never had when held forth to him in the shape of a bargain to the terms of which his means were totally and hopelessly inadequate. And in like manner, should any child of this world that is amongst us have heaven set forth to him as the reward of that obedience on which Heaven could look with complacency—there were a sense of incompetency for the task which would lead him to place this spiritual region at an impracticable distance away from him; and with the feeling that earth was his only portion, he would still grovel as before among the pursuits and the pleasures of that scene of carnality on which he all along had been wont to expatiate. But let heaven, instead of being exposed as the purchase of his merit, be set before him as a present to his necessities—instead of the law bidding him acquire it by his doings,

let the gospel bid him receive it as a gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord—in a word, instead of holding it forth to him for a price to be paid by himself, let it be held forth to him as the fruit of that price which the Saviour hath already rendered, by a death in the whole power and value of which he is freely invited to partake—then will it be seen, that the firmer his trust the faster will be the practical hold that the unseen world takes of his heart, and the more powerful its controlling influence over the whole of his habits and his history. The faith in a free pardon, which some might apprehend would rivet him to sin, has the effect of disenchanting him from that territory of sense where its wiles and its entanglements are laid. The stronger the faith in the nearness and certainty of the coming of heaven—the fuller is the access into the believer's soul of a taste for heaven's joys and an impulse towards heaven's services. It is the very thing which reaches that exterminating blow whereby the body of sin or the being of sin is destroyed; and the man is dispossessed of the tyranny wherewith it had lorded over him, and now ceases to be its slave—just because the death of Christ has opened for him the gates of everlasting blessedness, and his heart, transformed from the present evil world, is conformed to the delights and the doings of the upper Paradise.

We are far from having touched on all the principles which come into living and actual play within the believer's heart, and by which he is conducted from the state of being crucified with Christ forensically, to the state of being crucified with Him personally—so that he dies unto the power of sin, and through the Spirit mortifies the deeds done in his body, and finally crucifies the flesh with its affections and lusts. But let it here be remarked, that in the bringing of this about there is a strong likeness, in point of moral history and example, between Christ and His faithful disciple. There is a real analogy between the death for sin undergone by the former, and the mortification unto the power of sin that is undergone by the latter. There is a similarity between the spiritual exercise which conducted the Saviour to that victory which He achieved over the world in dying for its salvation, and that spiritual exercise which conducts the believer to the victory which he achieves over the world in dying unto the sinfulness of its earthly affections. The one for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross; and the other for the same joy—now set freely and gratuitously before him—endures the cross that is laid by the gospel on nature's inclina-

tions. The one made a voluntary renunciation of all that was in the world on leaving it; and the other makes the same voluntary renunciation, in transferring his love to that God the love of whom is opposed to the love of the world. We mistake the nature of Christ's work upon earth if we think not that He had to struggle with the fascination of this world's pleasures, and the seducing influence of this world's glories—for the god of this world had power to try Him though not to prevail over Him, and in all respects was He tempted like as we are. From His infancy to His death was there a contest of strenuousness and suffering and self-denial, and all that He might win the victory over a world that plied Him with its countless idolatries. And as was the Master, so is the servant. We have to follow Him in the steps of this holy warfare. The cross is little counted upon in these days of soft and silken professorship; and smooth indeed is that pilgrimage through which many are looking forward to the triumphs of a coming eternity. But let us not deceive ourselves. There is a process of crucifixion that must be gone through, not upon the flesh as with the Saviour, but upon the affections of the flesh. There must be a striving against sin, if not unto the death of the body, at least unto the death of its dearest and most darling appetites. There must be a winding up of the purposes and energies of the spiritual power to that pitch of resistance against the sinfulness of nature which wound up the soul of our Redeemer to the resolute giving up of Himself unto the sacrifice. And though the death unto sin, and the baptism into that death, and the being planted with Christ in the likeness of it, have been here understood and reasoned upon forensically—yet our faith in this understanding of it has not wrought its genuine effect upon us, unless we are dying unto the power of sin in our affections, and are purifying ourselves in the waters of spiritual baptism, and are daily likening unto Christ in that superiority over the world which led Him to surrender it, and are inflicting the violence of crucifixion on all that is sinful in the propensities of nature; so as that we are not merely judicially dealt with as if in our own persons we had suffered and died—but really and historically in these persons do we share with Christ in the fellowship of His sufferings and in a conformity to His death.

Ver. 7.—Here again I would understand a forensic death—the death we are counted to have suffered in Christ as a penalty for sin—the death which releases us from all further charge and

reckoning because of sin—the death which as effectually shields us from the further inflictions of severity by the unrelenting exactor, as the dying of the slave secures his escape from the cruelties of that tyrant beyond whose reach he is now placed. The connexion between the master and the servant ceases with the payment of wages; and when death—the wages of sin—is rendered to the sinner, the final settlement is made, and they become free the one from the other. Now it is true that these bitter wages of sin were inflicted not upon us but upon Christ: but for us He sustained them, and we are in as exempt a condition from any further reckoning on account of sin as if the adjustment had been made with us the principals, instead of being made with Christ the surety—or as if we had borne the whole punishment—or as if death, which is the fruit of sin, had been actually laid upon us.

Now it is very clear how this should rightfully free us from the punishment; but how should it also free us from the power? We have already unfolded one way in which deliverance from the former leads to deliverance from the latter; and the text suggests another way of it. Sin is here represented in the light of a tyrant, and the sinner as his slave. But let it be remembered, that there is a personal and a living tyrant from whose cruel and malignant breast the whole mischief of sin has emanated upon our world—one with whom the extension of sin is a matter of power and of policy—one whose dearest ambition is concerned in the warfare that is now going forward between the principles of light and of darkness—one whose heart is set upon the object of bringing men under the dominion of sin, and who finds his full and final gratification in the execution of the curse which it afterwards entails upon them. The errand upon which the Saviour came was to destroy the works of the devil; and you all perceive how, by His death upon the cross, He lifted at least the curse and the punishment of sin away from all who believe on Him, and how they who by faith are dead in Him are freed at least from condemnation. They have been extricated from the tyrant's grasp, in as far as death and the power of death are concerned. He has no farther claim upon them as the subjects of that infernal kingdom where he is to hold the reign of terror and of vengeance throughout all eternity; and where, in addition to the penal torments wherewith he shall exercise his unhappy victims, the agency of their own sinful passions will lay a heavy burden on the misery that overweighs them.

It is not enough adverted to—how much sin is its own punishment—how much, by the very mechanism of our sentient nature, wretchedness and wickedness are allied the one with the other—how inherently and how essentially suffering and moral evil are ever found in company—that there is an essential bitterness in sin itself, independently of any arbitrary infliction which in the shape of fire or of any material chastisement may be laid upon it in hell—and that this is just as true of sin under the gospel as under the law. The new economy under which we live has not so altered the character or the constitution of things as that goodness shall not of itself be a matter of enjoyment, and as that sin shall not of itself be matter of anguish and tribulation. The gospel has not changed the bitter into a sweet. It has not given a new set of properties to the affections of our moral nature. It has not infused the feeling of solemn and sacred delight into the affection of ungodliness. It has not given the character of a sweet and tranquil emotion to the affection of anger. It has not associated the transports of angelic love with the affection of malignity. Though you should be delivered by the death of Christ from the penal sufferings that attached to these evil principles in the heart—yet there are other sufferings that spring immediately and necessarily from the very exercise of the principles themselves, and from which you cannot be delivered but by the utter extirpation of the principles. In other words, you are not freed from the tyrant who lords it over sinners by a mere release from the penalty of disobedience. He is not disarmed of all his power to make you wretched by your legal deliverance from imprisonment in the future hell. If he is still permitted to reign in your heart, he can establish a hell there that were enough to imbitter your whole eternity. And in order that the death of Christ and your participation in that death shall give you complete freedom from the great tyrant and adversary of our species, he must be dethroned from his power over your present desires as well as from his power over your future destiny. Sinful affections will always be painful affections. And your deliverance is wrought, not by changing the quality of these affections, not by turning the painful into the pleasurable, but by ridding you of the affections altogether. And we repeat, that if by being dead in Christ we are freed from Satan, this cannot be fully accomplished but by our being in the language of the text freed from sin—from sin, not

merely disarmed of its curse, but from sin disarmed of its power and finally destroyed in its existence.

This unfolds to us another way in which the death of Christ, and our fellowship therewith, may be brought to bear on the practical object of so withstanding the assaults of temptation as that sin shall not have the dominion over us. It is not a matter of fancy, but a matter of most distinct scriptural revelation, that these assaults are conducted by a living and personal and withal most actively vicious and vindictive adversary, who is altogether intent on the object of retaining as entire and unbroken a moral ascendancy as he can possibly achieve over our species. You know how it is that by death Christ hath destroyed him who has the power of death, that is, the devil—how He stood to have all wreaked upon Himself which could be rightfully inflicted upon us because of our disobedience—how after this, we who partake in the benefits of His death may challenge an exemption from the cruel mastery of him who wont to maintain a resistless and unquestioned sway over the propensities of our fallen nature—how in the very moment of conflict with his enticements and his wiles this challenge may be made; and he, giving way to the force of it, will desist from his unholy enterprise of seducing us away from the new obedience of the gospel. Upon every occasion of exposure to the fascinations of moral evil may we go through the spiritual exercise of asserting our freedom from the power of him who arms these fascinations with all their influence; and strongly confident in the plea that by the death of Christ and our death in Him Satan has virtually done his worst upon us, and already expended that power wherewith he wont to hold us in bondage—it is no vain imagination that such a plea, if faithfully pressed against him in the hour of spiritual conflict, will surely prevail over him; and he, retiring a vanquished foe from the field of warfare, will leave us freed from the power of sin as we are freed from its curse and its condemnation.

It has been rightly said that we think not enough of those higher agencies which are concerned in the doings and the difficulties and the whole discipline of our preparation for eternity. We are apt to look on the conflict in which we are involved as a mere contest with flesh and blood—when, in fact, it is a contest with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places. We should know the might of our adversaries, that we may go rightly armed to the battle. And be assured

that the death of Christ is not a more effectual shield against the power that would drag you to the place of condemnation, than it is against the power that would now so lord it over the affections of your heart as to perpetuate the reign of sin within you, and make you as effectually as before the slaves of those evil desires and principles which war against the soul. Christ hath spoiled the great adversary of all his power. He hath left him no claim of ascendancy whatever over those who believe in Him. It is true that in the mysterious struggle which took place between Him and the prince of darkness there was a sting put forth which pierced Him even unto the death; but in the very act of being so pierced, the sting was plucked away, and Satan is now bereft of all his power to hurt those who are buried with Christ in baptism, and have been planted together with Him in His likeness. He did not merely disarm him of his power to scourge you, and leave untouched his power to seduce you. It was an entire dethronement of the god of this world that He effected; and what you have distinctly to do, my brethren, in the heat and urgency of your besetting temptations, is to set up your death unto sin in Christ as your defence against the further authority of sin over you—is to interpose the plea of His atonement between you and the attempts of the great adversary—is to affirm, in opposition to all his devices, that he can no more compel your services than a tyrant or a taskmaster can compel services from a dead slave. It is not possible, my brethren, that Satan thus withstood and thus striven against, shall prevail over you. The man who, riveting all his confidence in the death of Christ, has become partaker of all its immunities and of all its holy influences, will not only find peace from the guilt of sin, but protection from its tyranny. This faith will not only be to him a barrier from the abyss of its coming vengeance, but it will be to him a panoply of defence against its present ascendancy over his soul. The sure way to put Satan to flight is to resist him, steadfast in this faith, which will be to him who exercises it a shield to quench all the fiery darts of the adversary.

We are aware of the charges of being strange and mystical and imaginary, to which this representation, however scriptural it may be, exposes us. But we ask, on the one hand, those who have often been defeated by the power of temptation—whether they ever recollect in a single instance that the death of Christ, believed and regarded and made use of in the way now ex-

plained, was a weapon put forth in the contest with sin? and we ask, on the other hand, those who have made use of this weapon—whether it ever failed them in their honest and faithful attempts to resist the instigations of evil? We apprehend that the testimonies of both will stamp an experimental as well as a scriptural soundness upon the affirmation of my text, that he who by faith in the death of Christ is freed from the condemnation of sin, has also an instrument in his possession which has only to be plied and kept in habitual exercise that he may habitually be free from its power.

LECTURE XXXI.

ROMANS VI. 8-10.

"Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him : knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more ; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once ; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God."

By the death of Christ a full penalty was rendered for sin, insomuch that He could no more be reckoned with on account of it. He undertook to be surety for all who should believe ; and having finished His undertaking the matter was closed, and the creditor now ceased from putting in any further claim, or preferring any further challenge against Him. For us to be dead with Christ is just to share in this very exoneration. It was for us that the account was settled ; and just as much as if by death—the appointed penalty—we had settled it ourselves, do we now stand acquitted of all further count and reckoning because of sin. In the covenanting of ordinary trade a deficiency from our engagements brings us into debt ; but should an able cautioner liquidate the whole, we in him may be said to have sustained the prosecution, and borne the damage, and are now clear of the weight of conscious debt—because in him we have made full and satisfactory payment. In our covenant with the Lawgiver of heaven and earth a deficiency from our engagements brings us into guilt, but should a competent mediator take upon his own person the whole burden of its imputation and its penalty, we in him may be said to have been pursued even unto death—which was its sentence, and should now feel clear of the weight of conscious guilt, because in him we have rendered a full atonement. And we live beneath our privilege, we fail in making the required use of the great propitiation, we are deficient in the homage that is due to its completeness and its power, if we cast not the burden of legal condemnation away from our spirits. It is detracting from the richness and the efficacy of Heaven's boon, that we cherish the haunting imagination of a debt that the revealed Surety has done away ; or.

changing the terms, if we cherish the haunting imagination of a guilt for which the High Priest whom God Himself has set forth, has made a sacrifice wherewith God Himself has declared that He is well pleased. So that it is your positive duty to take the comfort of this, and to feel the deliverance of this. In as far as you do not, in so far you nullify the work of redemption, and cast a dimness and a disparagement over the most illustrious exhibition of Heaven's grace—dignified as it is with the full expression of Heaven's righteousness. Be dead with Christ then; and this you are by putting faith in the atoning efficacy of that death. He who so believes is as free from condemnation as if the cup of it had been put into his own hands, and he had already exhausted it to its last dregs—as if in his own person he had walked the whole length of the valley and shadow of that death which every sinner has rightfully incurred—as if what was only possible for the Godhead to have borne within a given compass of time he himself had borne—the sufferings of that eternity which is in reserve for all the guilt that is unexpiated. Be dead with Christ by giving credit to the gospel testimony about the death of Christ, and the whole of this tremendous retribution for sin with you is as good as over; and it is your own comfort, as well as God's commandment, that you henceforth—with the assurance of being set at liberty from sin—walk before him relieved from the bondage both of its conscious guilt and of its anticipated vengeance.

But in order to be fully conformed to the death of Christ, we must advert to what is said in the ninth and tenth verses about the full and conclusive efficacy of it—so conclusive, that it had not again to be repeated, for He had to die only once, and death hath no more dominion over him. There was power enough for the whole purpose of our deliverance from guilt in the *one* offering—a truth of sufficient worth, it would appear, to be urged by the apostle in other places of the New Testament, when he says that Christ did not offer Himself often, for then must He have often suffered since the foundation of the world—but now *once* hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself: And Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many: And it is through the offering of the body of Jesus-Christ *once for all*, that we are cleansed from guilt: And finally, laying upon this point the stress of a frequent reiteration, does the apostle say that it is by *one* offering that we are for ever perfected. There is surely a real practical importance in a matter

so much insisted on ; and accordingly we infer from another passage that it was to save the believer from the constant recurrence and revival in his heart of a sense of guilt—it was that once purged he should have no more conscience of sins—it was that he should look on the controversy between him and God as now fully adjusted and at an end—in was that in the contemplation of that one act—even the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem—he should feel as conclusively relieved from the imagination of guilt, as the son in whose behalf the father has interposed and given ample satisfaction to all his creditors feels himself relieved from the imagination of debt—it was that we should no longer conjure into life again those fearful misgivings which the one death of Christ and our death with Him should hush into everlasting oblivion ; so that if it be our duty to rejoice in the comfort of our full acquittance through the satisfaction rendered by Him who poured out His soul for us, it goes to enhance the comfort still more, that there is an amount and a value in this same satisfaction, for meeting all the exigencies of our future history in the world—thus ministering the very antidote to our fears which the apostle John urges upon his disciples, that if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, even Him who is the propitiation for our sins, Jesus Christ the righteous.

If we be dead with Christ—and death have no more dominion over Him—this is tantamount to guilt being no longer chargeable upon us. And ought not this to be felt as a precious enhancement of the blessing? setting an irrevocable seal as it were upon our reconciliation with God—placing it securely beyond the reach, not merely of the impediments which sin already contracted had thrown in the way, but also beyond the reach of all those future accidents, that the sin, into which we shall be surprised or into which we shall stumble, may afterwards involve us in. We set not the remedy at its full worth if we use it not to quiet the alarms of the guilt that is before us, as well as of the guilt that is behind us—if, like the children of Israel, we think that some great purifying ceremonial must be set up anew to wash away the outstanding defilements of the current year, under which we are meanwhile in a state of distance and displeasure from God—if we regard not the fulness that is in Christ as a perennial fountain, which is at all times accessible, and is a very present cure to the conscience, under the many inroads and solicitations of that sinful nature which never ceases to beset us

with its urgency; thus overbearing the sense of guilt with the sense of that healing virtue which lies in the blood of the one sacrifice; and upholding the spirit of the believer, even while oppressed with the infirmities of his earthly tabernacle, in the clear and confident feeling of his acceptance with God.

But is not this, it may be said, equivalent to the holding forth of a Popish indulgence for all sins, past, present, and to come? And is not this a signal for Antinomianism? And will not the feeling of our death to the guilt of sin make us all alive to the charm of its many allurements—now heightened by a sense of impunity? And will not the peace that we are thus called upon to maintain, even while sin has its residence in our hearts, lull us still further into a peace that will not be broken, even though sin should reign over our habits and our history? We have sometimes thought so, my brethren, and under the suggestion of such a fear, have qualified the freeness, and laid our clauses and our exceptions and our drawbacks on the fulness of the gospel; and solicitous for the purity of the human character, have lifted a timid and a hesitating voice when proclaiming the overtures of pardon for human guilt. But we are now thoroughly persuaded, that the effective way of turning men from sin to righteousness is to throw wide and open before them the door of reconciliation; and that a real trust in God for acceptance is ever accompanied with a real movement of the heart towards godliness; and that to mix or darken the communications of good-will to the world through Him who died for it is not more adverse to the rest of the sinner than it is adverse to the holiness of the sinner; and that, after all, the true way of keeping up love in the heart is to keep up peace in the conscience—thus making your freedom from the guilt of sin the best guarantee for your deliverance from its power; and this because if you can interpose the death of Christ in arrest of condemnation, when Satan for the purposes of disturbance would inject the fears of unbelief into your bosom, he the great adversary of souls, paralysed at the very sight of such a barrier in all his measures of hostility against you, would retire a baffled enemy from that contest, in which, for the purposes of a sinful dominion over you, he tried to assail and to conquer by the force of his temptations.

But the certainty of that connexion which obtains between a death unto the guilt of sin and a death unto its power will be more manifest afterwards: And meanwhile, after having said so

much on the clause of being dead with Christ, it may now be time for offering our remarks on the clause—that we shall live with Him.

Yet before we proceed to the elucidation of this latter clause, we may remark a sanctifying influence in the former one. We are looked upon by the Lawgiver as dead with Christ—that is, as having in Him borne the penalty of our sins, and therefore as no longer the subjects of a curse that has already been discharged, of a condemnatory sentence that is already executed. Now though we share alike with Christ in this privilege of a final acquittance from that death which has no more dominion over Him, and is for ever averted from us, yet it was at His expense alone, and not at ours, that the acquittance was obtained. It would have cost us an eternity of suffering in hell to have traversed the whole of that vengeance that was denounced upon iniquity; and it was therefore so condensed upon the person of the Saviour, who had the infinity of the Godhead to sustain it, that on Him, during the limited period of His sufferings on earth, all the vials of the Almighty's wrath were poured forth, and so were expended. By our fellowship with Him in His death we have been borne across a gulf which to ourselves would have been utterly impassable; and have been landed on a safe and peaceful shore over which no angry cloud whatever is suspended; and have been conclusively placed beyond the reach of those devouring billows in which the despisers of the gospel salvation shall be absorbed, and have for ever their fiery habitation. But this is just because Christ has in the greatness of His love for us travelled through the depths of all this endurance—just because in the agonies of the garden and the sufferings of the cross were concentrated the torments of millions through eternity—just because, in that mysterious passion which for us He underwent, He with tears and cries and anguish unutterable forced the way of reconciliation—and we who are dead with Christ partake in all the triumphs of this sore purchase, but not in the pains of it, and have now our feet established on a quiet landing-place. And the sanctifying influence to which we now advert, and which no real believer can withstand, is gratitude to Him who hath wrought out for us so mighty a deliverance. It is the correspondency of love from our hearts to that love which burnt so unquenchably in His, and bore Him up under the burden of a world's atonement. It is the rightful sentiment, that now we are not our own, but the ransomed and redeemed

property of another. This touches, and touches irresistibly, upon him who rightly appreciates all the horrors of that everlasting captivity from which we have been brought, and all the expense of that dreadful equivalent which Christ had to render—and he thus judges, that as Christ died for all, then were all dead; and He died that those who live might live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again.

‘We believe that we shall also live with Him.’ To explain the phrase of our being dead with Christ, we had to ascertain how it was that Christ was dead; and we find by the following verse that He died unto sin, and we in like manner are dead unto sin; or in other words, the wages of sin being paid to Christ, there is no further reckoning between them—and as this transaction was for us and in our stead, it is just as if death—the wages of sin—had been rendered unto us; and sin can now hold no further count, and prefer no further charge against us. This sense of dying unto sin on the part of Christ, will conduct us to the sense of His living unto God. The life that He now lives with Him has been conferred upon Him in the shape of wages. In other words, it is a reward consequent upon what He has done for us and in our stead—even as the death that He bore was a punishment consequent upon His having become accountable for us and in our stead. This will recall to you, my brethren, a distinction to which we have already had occasion to advert, and for which there seemeth a real warrant in the book of revelation—the distinction which there is, in point of effect, between the passive and the active obedience of Christ—the one satisfying for sin and making an end of its curse and punishment; so that to be dead with Christ and dead unto sin is to live in the condition of those on whom the curse and the punishment have already been expended, and who have therefore nothing now to fear from its charges—whereas to live with Christ, or to be alive unto God, is to share with Him that positive favour which Christ hath merited from God by His positive righteousness. It is something more than simply to cease from being the children of wrath, and the heirs of damnation—it is to become the objects of a positive good-will, and the heirs or the expectants of a positive reward.

The single term *also* indicates that the privilege of sharing with Him in His life is distinct from and additional to the privilege of sharing in His death. By the one we only escape the curse—by the other we obtain the blessing. By the one we

are lightened of the debt which He hath discharged through His sufferings—by the other we share in the property which He hath acquired through His services. The one shuts against us the gate of hell; the other opens for us the gate of heaven. Did we only share with Him in His death, we should be found midway between the region of pain and the region of positive enjoyment; but by also sharing with Him in His life, we are elevated to the higher region, and partake in those very glories and felicities to which the Saviour has been exalted. Had the alone work of the Saviour been an expiation for sin, there would have been a death—and such a death as would have exempted us from its endurance, but there would have been no resurrection. But in the words of the prophet Daniel, our Saviour did more than finish transgression and make an end of sin—He also brought in an everlasting righteousness; and so reaped for Himself and those who believe in Him a positive reward, the first-fruits of which were His own resurrection to blessedness, and the consummation of which will be a similar resurrection to all His followers. It was the atonement which laid Him in His grave; it was His righteousness that lifted Him forth again, and bore Him up to Paradise. Had there been an atonement and nothing more, like prisoners dismissed from the bar, we would have been simply let alone. But He brought in a righteousness also—so that not only are we relieved of all fear, but—inspired with joyful hope—we, in addition to being dead with Him, believe that we shall also live with Him. And thus it is, that while He was delivered up unto the death for our offences, that the guilt of them may be absolved in the atonement which He made—He was raised again for our justification, or that we may share in that merit for which He himself was exalted, and on account of which we too believe that we shall be exalted also.

You will see then, that as we understand the phrase of our dying with Christ forensically, so we understand the phrase of our living with Christ forensically. It is our living through His righteousness in that favour which is better than life—the sense of which favour will keep our spirits tranquil and happy here, and will often—even among the turmoils of our earthly pilgrimage—brighten into such a gleam of comfort and elevation as shall be the foretaste to us of the coming ecstasy—when, on our entrance into the habitation of God's unclouded and immediate presence, we shall share with our Redeemer, now on high, in His full enjoyment of the divine glory; and, beheld as we shall be

in the face of Christ, in that love wherewith the Father hath loved Him.

But just as a believing sense on our part of our being dead with Christ unto sin in the forensic sense of the phrase leads, as we have already affirmed, to our being dead unto sin in the personal sense of the phrase, so as that we become dead in our regard for sin—in like manner, my brethren, a believing sense of our living with Christ in the forensic sense of the phrase, will lead to a living with Him in the personal sense of the phrase also; so as that the style and character of our life shall resemble His—loving what He loves, sharing with Him in His tastes and in His powers as well as in His privileges, walking along with Him in the very same track of happiness and glory; for which purpose it is altogether essential that we be endued with a heart which delights in the very same pursuits, and feels the working and aspiration of the very same properties. Or in other words, admitted as we are to rejoice with Him in that favour of God which He hath purchased by His obedience, we shall not have the conviction and the feeling of this without also rejoicing with Him, even as He does now, in beholding the character of God—in gazing with delight on the aspect of His pure and unspotted holiness—in copying upon our own spirits all those graces and virtues which we admire in His. To live with Christ in the fellowship of those privileges which by His merit He has won, will thus bring in its train our living with Him in the fellowship of all that kindred excellence by which His person is adorned—being alive unto God, not merely in regard to our right through Christ to His friendship, but alive unto Him in the restoration of a nature that is now attracted by the charm of His moral attributes, and finds both its delight and its dignity to live in the imitation of them.

There is a sure transition from our being justified by faith, to our being sanctified by faith. There is a provision made for this in the mechanism of the moral nature of man below; and there is a provision made for it in that celestial mechanism which has been set up in heaven—and from which there come down those holy influences that serve to regenerate our world. Faith makes known to us the love of God, and upon this gratitude calls forth the love of the heart to Him in return. Faith reveals to us that exquisite union, which is held out in the gospel between the awful and the lovely attributes of His nature; and the fear that hath torment being now allayed, and the con-

sciousness of personal security being now established, we can, without dread and without disturbance, take an entire view of the Divinity, and add to the homage of our thanksgiving the homage of a reverence that is free from terror, to such a full and finished glory. Faith opens to our sight the real character of heaven, in the sacredness of its angelic delights and its holy services—so that to rejoice in the hope of our living there, it is indispensable that we should rejoice in the devices and the doings of saintliness here. Neither can we cherish the belief that we shall live with Christ, unless the kind of life that is held through eternity along with Him be dear and congenial to our bosoms—so that grant the faith through which we obtain an interest in His righteousness to reside and operate within us, there are securities in the very constitution of the inner man that we shall aspire after, and at last attain unto holiness.

Yet however suited the mechanism of our hearts is to this purifying operation of faith—it will not move, neither will it persevere in the movement, without a continued impulse from above; and to secure this there has been raised—if I may use the expression—a mechanism in heaven, by the working of which a stream of living water is made to descend upon the moral nature of man, so as to attune all its emotions and desires to those of the spiritual nature of the upper Paradise. In other words, there is a true sanctuary there, whereof Christ Himself is the minister, and it is His office not merely to carry up the prayers of His people to Him who sitteth upon the throne, mixed with the acceptable odour of His own merits, but also to send down from the Holiest of Holies upon our world that regenerating influence by which man is awakened to a new moral existence, and upheld in all the affections and in all the exercises of godliness. He is the prevailing Advocate, through whom our ascending supplications rise with acceptance to God. But He, the Lord from heaven, is also the quickening Spirit, through whom the light and the heat of the sanctuary are made to descend upon us. It is thus that faith is deposited at the first, and it is thus that faith is upheld ever afterwards in power to work within us all the feelings and all the fruits of righteousness. The Holy Ghost, that blessing so precious and so pre-eminent as to be styled the promise of the Father—it was by His power and agency express, that Christ was revived, and His resurrection from the grave was accomplished; and as if to fulfil and illustrate the saying of our Saviour—that because I

live ye shall live also, this very power has been committed to His mediatorial hand; and it is just by its working that He quickens us, who by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, into a spiritual resurrection. Thus are we made spiritually alive unto God, and walk in newness of life before Him. And if it be asked, how shall this virtue be brought to bear upon us, we answer that the prayer of faith will bring it down at any time—that with it the door of heaven's sanctuary is opened, and the required blessing passes with sure conveyance into that believer's heart the door of which is open to receive it: And such is the established accordancy between the doings of the upper sanctuary and the doings of the Church upon earth, that every member thereof who lives in the favour of God because of the righteousness of Christ imputed unto him, will live also in the love and likeness of God because of the holiness of the Spirit infused into him.

The only practical inference I shall at present insist upon is founded on the connexion that we have so abundantly adverted to, between the faith of a sinner and his sanctification. The next verse will give us room for enlarging upon this all-important topic. But meanwhile be assured, that you may with as much safety confide the cause of your holiness upon earth to the exercise of believing, as you confide the cause of your happiness in heaven to this exercise. The primary sense of believing that we shall live with Christ is, that through His righteousness we shall be admitted to that place of glory which He now occupies—there to spend with Him a blissful eternity; and according to this belief, if real, so shall it be done unto us. But in like manner also, let us just believe that we shall live with Him here by entering even now upon the fellowship of those virtues which adorn His character, and of that spirit which actuated the whole of His conduct, and according to this belief, if real, so shall it be done unto us. It is indeed to the eye of nature a most unlikely transformation, that creatures so prone as we are to sense and to ungodliness, and beset with the infirmities of our earthly tabernacle, and weighed down under that load of corruption wherewith these vile bodies are ever encumbering us—that we should break forth even here into an atmosphere of sacredness, and inhale that spiritual life by which we become assimilated to the saints and the angels that now surround the throne of God. But the more unlikely this is to the eye of nature, so much the more glorious will be the victory of our

faith, that it triumphs over the strength of an improbability so grievous. And if, like Abraham of old, we against hope believe in hope, and stagger not at the promise because of unbelief, but are strong in faith, giving glory to God—then, barren as we constitutionally are of all that is spiritually excellent, still, such is the influence of our faith over our sanctification, that—if there be truth in the promises of God—we shall be made to abound in the fruits of righteousness.

The best practical recipe I can give you, my brethren, for becoming holy, is to be steadfast in the faith. Believe that Christ's righteousness is your righteousness, and His graces will become your graces. Believe that you are a pardoned creature, and this will issue in your becoming a purified creature. Take hold of the offered gift of Heaven, and you will not only enter after death on the future reversion of heaven's triumphs and heaven's joys, but before death—nay even now, will you enter upon the participation of heaven's feelings, and the practice of heaven's moralities. Go in prayer with the plea of Christ's atonement and His merits, and state, in connexion with this plea, that what you want is that you be adorned with Christ's likeness, and that you be assisted in putting on the virtues which signalized Him; and you will find the plea to be omnipotent, and the continued habit of such prayer, applied to all the exigencies of your condition, will enable you to substantiate the example of your Saviour throughout all the varieties of providence and of history. In a word, faith is the instrument of sanctification. And when you have learned the use of this instrument, you have learned the way to become holy upon earth now, as well as the way to become eternally happy in heaven hereafter. The believing prayer that God will aid you in this difficulty, and counsel you in this perplexity, and enable you to overcome in this trial of charity and patience, and keep up in your heart the principle of godliness, amid the urgency of all those seducing influences by which you are surrounded—this you will find, my brethren, to be the sure stepping-stone to a right acquittal of yourselves in all the given circumstances of your condition in the world. And let the repeated experience of your constant failures, when you had nothing but the power and the energies of nature to trust to, shut you up unto the faith.

LECTURE XXXII.

ROMANS VI. 11.

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

WE regard this verse as proof in itself of the forensic meaning which we have all along ascribed to the phrases of our being dead unto sin and alive unto God. The great object of this chapter is to establish the alliance that there is between a sinner's acceptance through Christ and a sinner's holiness. And in the verse before us there is a practical direction given for carrying this alliance into effect. We are called upon to reckon of ourselves that we are dead unto sin, and alive unto God; and this is a step towards our becoming holy. Now what are we to reckon ourselves? why, if these phrases be taken in the personal sense of them—it would be that we are mortified to the pleasures and temptations of sin, and alive to nothing but the excellencies of God's character, and a sense of the obligations we are under to love and to honour Him; or in other words, we are to reckon ourselves holy in order that we may become holy. It were a strange recipe for curing a man of his dishonesty, to bid him reckon of himself that he is an honest man. One really does not see the charm and the operation of this expedient at all. I do not see how, by the simple act of counting myself what I really am not, I am to be transferred from that which I am to that which I choose to imagine of myself. And a still more radical objection is, that it is bidding me reckon that to be true which I know to be false. It is bidding me cherish the belief of a thing that is not. It is calling—not upon my faith in a matter for which there is no evidence—but upon my imagination of a matter that is directly opposite to a reality of which I am conscious. To lay hold of a sinner and bid him reckon of himself that he is a saint, is to bid him admit into credit that which he knows to be untrue—and all for the purpose too of turning him from the creature that he feels he is, to

the creature that he fancies he is. We have heard much of the power of imagination ; but this is giving it an empire and an ascendancy that exceeds all which was before known or observed of our nature—besides the very obvious moral impropriety that there would be in an apostle telling, either an unconverted man to conceive of himself that which is most glaringly and notoriously untrue, or, if you will restrict the injunction of my text to disciples and believers, telling him to think what no humble Christian can possibly think of himself—that he is crucified unto the love of sin, and that all his felt and living desires are towards God and godliness.

Now you free the passage of all these difficulties by taking these phrases according to the forensic interpretation that we have given them. To be dead unto sin is to be in the condition of one on whom death, the sentence of sin, has already been inflicted, if not in his own person at least in that of his representative ; so that the execution for the transgression of the law is a matter that is now past and over. To be alive unto God is to live in the favour of God—a favour to which we have been admitted through the services of a Mediator, or in the language of the text, ‘through Jesus Christ our Lord.’ To reckon that Christ died for the one purpose, and to reckon that He brought in an everlasting righteousness for the other purpose, is to reckon not on a matter of fancy, but on a matter proposed, and that too on the evidence of God’s own testimony, to faith. It is not to cherish a delusive belief of what we are in ourselves, and that in the face of our own consciousness—it is to cherish a most solid and warrantable belief of what God has done for us, and that on the credit we place in His own intimation. Ere we can in our own minds bolster up the reckoning that we are personally dead unto sin and personally alive unto God, there must be many misgivings, and sad failures and fluctuations of confidence, in the constant detections that we must be ever making of our own ungodliness. And at best it is a very precarious security indeed for holiness, if the way to become holy is to reckon that we are so. But when, instead of looking downward on the dark and ambiguous tablet of our own character, we look upward to that Saviour who now sitteth in exaltation, after having rendered the penalty of our disobedience and won for us the reward of life everlasting—we hold by a thing of historical fact, and not by a thing of deceitful imagination ; we rest on the completeness of a finished expiation and perfect obedience, and transfer our

reckoning from a ground where conscience meets us and gives us the lie, to a ground occupied by the stable and enduring realities of Scripture—where God who cannot lie meets us with the assurances of His truth, and the voice of His kindness welcomes us to the deliverance of those who are dead with Christ—to the high and heavenly anticipations of those who are alive with Him.

When a sinner is bidden to reckon himself dead unto sin, and this phrase is understood personally, he is bidden to reckon himself a saint—to reckon what is not true; and surely this is not the way of causing him to be a saint. But when he is bidden to reckon himself dead unto sin, and this phrase is understood forensically, he is bidden look upon himself as a partaker with Christ in all the privileges and immunities of Him on whom the sentence is already discharged and gone by, and to whom therefore there is no more condemnation. But it may be said, might not this also be an untruth? Do I read anywhere in the Bible of Christ dying for me in particular? The apostle is speaking to his converts when he says, "Reckon yourselves dead unto sin." But is it competent to address any one individual at random, to reckon himself in this blessed condition of freedom from a penalty that Christ hath intercepted and absorbed in behalf of all who believe on Him? Might not he in so reckoning be as effectually working himself up into the belief of a delusive imagination, as if he reckoned that he was a new creature—while all the habits and tendencies of the old man still remained with him in full and unabated operation?

Why, my brethren, it is nowhere said in the Bible that Christ so died for me in particular, as that by His simple dying the benefits of His atonement are mine in possession. But it is everywhere said in the Bible, that He so died for me in particular, as that by His simple dying the benefits of His atonement are mine in offer. They are mine if I will. Such terms as *whosoever* and *all* and *any* and *Ho, every one*, bring the gospel redemption specifically to my door; and there it stands for acceptance as mine in offer, and ready to become mine in possession on my giving credit to the word of the testimony. The terms of the gospel message are so constructed that I have just as good a warrant for reckoning myself dead unto sin, as if, instead of the announcement that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation for the sins of the world through faith in His blood, I had been the only sinner in the world; or I had been singled

out by name and by surname, and it was stated that God had set forth Christ a propitiation for the sins of me individually, through faith in His blood. The act of reckoning myself dead unto sin through Christ, is just the act of receiving the truth of Christ's declaration according to the terms of the declaration. It is not reckoning on the truth of a falsehood. Were it a personal phrase, no doubt it were reckoning that to be in the house which is nowhere to be found within its limits. But it being a forensic phrase, it is just opening the door of the house, and suffering that to enter in which is pressing upon it for admittance. Bid the sinner reckon in the former way, and you bid him feel that to be a reality within him which has no existence. Bid him reckon in the latter way, and you bid him fetch from the abiding realities which are without, a conviction that will carry light and peace and comfort into his bosom—you bid him close with the overtures of the gospel—you bid him appropriate to himself what is said of the power of Christ's blood, and the purpose and effect of His sacrifice. But it is not an appropriation which carries him beyond the exercise of a legitimate faith—because not an appropriation beyond the real meaning and application of the terms that I have just adverted to. By reckoning himself personally dead unto sin and personally alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord, he would outrun the reckoning of his own conscience. But by reckoning himself forensically dead unto sin and forensically alive unto God, he does not outrun the reckoning of the Bible. He gathers no more out of the field of revelation than he finds to be lying upon its surface, and laid there just that he may fall in with it and take it home. Without the terms, 'whosoever,' and 'all,' and 'any,' and 'Ho, every one,' it might not have been so; but with these terms, he may reckon of himself that forensically he is dead with Christ—and yet believe no more than the terms in question give him the fullest warrant for.

And what is more: you will not acquire a virtuous character by barely imagining that you have it when you have it not. But there is another way in which it is conceivable that a virtuous character may be acquired: not by any false reckoning about your actual character, but by a true reckoning about your actual condition. A mistaken sense as to the principle that inspires your heart will never be the means of bringing a right principle there. But a correct and habitual sense as to the place you occupy may—by its moral influence on the feelings—

have the effect both of introducing and nourishing the right principle. It is not by imagining I am a saint that I shall become so; but by reflecting on the condemnation due to me as a sinner—on the way in which it has been averted from my person—on the passage by which, without suffering to myself, I have been borne across the region of vindictive justice, and conclusively placed on the fair and favoured shore of acceptance with God—the sense and the reckoning of all this may transform me from the sinner that I am into the saint that I am not. The executed criminal, who has been galvanized into life again, may be sent forth upon society, and there exposed to the temptation of all his old opportunities. It is not by reckoning of himself that he is now altogether dead to the power of these temptations—it is not by reckoning himself to be an honest man that he will become so. It is not by reckoning falsely of his character that he will change it into something different; but by reckoning truly of his condition, he may bring a moral consideration to bear upon his heart that will transform his character. How shall I, who for theft have passed through the hands of the executioner, recur to the very practice that destroyed me? And how, in like manner says the believer, shall I who have virtually undergone this sentence of the law—that the soul which sinneth it shall die—how shall I, now that I have been made alive again, continue in that hateful thing of whose malignant tendencies in itself, and of whose utter irreconcilableness to the will and character of God, I have in the death of my representative and my surety obtained so striking a demonstration? It is not the sense or reckoning that you are a sanctified man—it is not by this that the work of sanctification is done. It is the sense or reckoning that you are a justified man—it is this which has the sanctifying influence—it is this which does the work, or is the instrument of doing it.

Mark then, my brethren, the apostle's recipe for holiness. It is not that you reckon yourself already pure; but it is that you reckon yourself already pardoned. It is not that you feel as if the fetters of corruption have already been struck off, but that you feel as if altogether lightened and released from the fetters of condemnation, and that you may go forth in the peace and joy of a reconciled creature. And somehow or other, this, it would appear, is the way of arriving at the new spirit and the new life of a regenerated creature. And how it should fall with the efficacy of a charm on a sinner's ear, when told that the first

stepping-stone towards that character of heaven after which he has been so hopelessly labouring is to assure himself that all the guilt of his past ungodliness is now done away—that the ransom of iniquity is paid—and that by a death the pains of which were never felt, the penalties of that law he so oft has broken shall never reach him. It is indeed levelling the mountains, and making the crooked paths straight, when such a highway of access is thrown across the gulf of separation that is between sin and sacredness; and never, my brethren, will this transition be made good—never will the sinner know what it is to taste of spiritual joys, or to breathe with kindred delight in a spiritual atmosphere, till, buried in another's death, and raised in another's righteousness, he can walk with the confident peace of one who knows that he is safe under the secure and ample canopy of the offered Mediatorship.

So that the apostle tells us here—and in the imperative mood—to reckon that our death by sin is over and gone by; and this too, you will observe, for the purpose of bringing about our sanctification. What a powerful and practical outset does he afford to his career! He dreads no Antinomianism. He fearlessly bids the people to count that one man has died for them all; and he bids them habitually reckon upon this, recur to it, keep it in memory, always be acting and holding fast the confidence that they began with, and not cast it away. The man who is called upon to reckon that he was dead unto sin personally, would often feel as if out of his reckoning, and many a misgiving would visit him, and he might thus spend his life in the tossings of anxiety. But the man who is called upon to reckon that he is dead unto sin forensically, is presented with a solid foundation in that which Christ hath done for him, is simply bidden count upon that as a settled point, which has indeed been settled fast; and when like to be abandoned by hope, he has only to feel for the solidity of his ground, and in so doing will find that is a rock of strength which he has got to stand upon. And all this as the first step to a life of new obedience; all this as a primary command, among those which the apostle afterwards delivers, for the purpose of securing our transition from sin unto holiness; all this as a staff to support us on the narrow way of discipline and duty, as provision for our journey to the land of uprightness. And what I bid you remark in the first place, is the very peculiar instrument which the apostle puts into the hands of his disciples, for the purpose of making them regenerated creatures

—even a trusty reckoning on their part that they are already reconciled creatures ; and what an evidence here of God's desire that you should feel at peace from the apprehension of His wrath, when it is this very peace that He proposes as the means of making you the partakers of the worth and purity of His nature !

But in the second place, will the means be really effectual ? It was so with Paul. He gloried not in himself—not in his crucifixion to sin—not in his resurrection to holiness ; he gloried in the cross of Christ, and the crucifixion to sin came out of this glorying. Thereby the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. The personal result came out of the forensic reckoning ; and there is not a believer after him who will not experience the same result out of the same reckoning. Your business is to count of yourselves that in Christ your condemnation is discharged, that in Him your acceptance is granted. And the more steadfastly and constantly you keep by this business, the more certainly will you find to your blessed experience, that a new heart and a new history emerge from the doing of it. The hourly habit of reflecting upon the new condition in which Christ has placed you, will sustain an hourly influence by which there shall germinate and grow the new character that Christ proposes should arise in you. You have laboured long perhaps, after the life of God and of heaven in the soul ; but this is just because you have been labouring long in the wrong track, or with wrong instruments. Turn you now unto that doctrine, which is as much the power of God unto sanctification here as unto salvation hereafter ; and know from this time forward, that the way of reaching the life of holiness you aspire after is to live a life of faith in the Son of God.

I have already adverted to some of the moral influences wherewith the consideration of our having been as good as dead for sin is so abundantly pregnant ; and even with a reiteration that might have fatigued and over-satiated some of you, did I, in remarking on the second verse, expatiate at great length on what struck me as the first of these influences. It is the same with that which may be addressed to a man who has been put to death for a crime and then made alive again. A most impressive lesson to him of the genius and character of that government under which he lives ; of its hostility to the wickedness for which he suffered ; of its intolerance of a transgression, into which if he again fall, there may be no mercy and

no readmittance from the sentence that will be surely in reserve for him. And in like manner, the sinner who through Christ has been restored from condemnation learns, both in the sentence that was incurred and in the atonement that was rendered, what a repulsion there is between sin and sacredness; and how, if the character of God be the same that it ever was, he, in sinning wilfully, dares over again the still unquelled antipathies of the Godhead—and that if he gives himself up to the old service which seduced him at first from the one rightful authority, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary. God forbid that we should continue in sin that grace may abound—or that because we have been brought back again within the limits of God's beloved family, we should bring with us that which before had banished us forth of a domain from which sin of all other things must be rooted out, because sin of all other things is that which most sorely and most grievously offendeth.

But he does not know all, if he only know of that inheritance to which he has been readmitted, that no sin is suffered to have occupancy there. This is only knowing the quality of that which is exiled from heaven's family—but it is not knowing the quality of that which is welcomed and cherished and carried to uttermost perfection there. It is giving me to understand the character of the outcast, but it is not giving me to understand the character of the guest. By being dead with Christ the door of entry is again opened for me into the great household of the blessed; and it is well to be solemnized into the impression, that I must shun the hateful thing which banished me therefrom. But I should also be led to aspire—and with all my earnestness—after that estimable thing which stamps the character and constitutes the honour and the delight of this rejoicing family. The disgraced felon whose frauds had expelled him from society, when again introduced within its limits is furnished by all his recollections with a strong and actuating motive to put all the atrocities of his former life away from him; but not only so,—by his strenuous cultivation of the opposite virtues, by the scrupulous integrity of his dealings, by the high-minded disdain in which he should hold even the slightest deviations from the path of honour, by the sensitive nicety of an uprightness on which no discernible flaw can be detected—he might regain a distinguished place in that living

circle, the esteem and happiness of which he had before forfeited, and reach a status of positive credit and enjoyment, in room of that ignominy which before had covered him. So also of heaven on the other side of death, and of the road which leads to heaven on this side of death—so also of the habit and condition of Paradise hereafter, and most assuredly of the habit of preparation for Paradise here. He who is dead with Christ, and so freed from condemnation, is not ushered at once into the celestial regions : but he is forthwith set on the journey which leads to them. And with his eye full on the moral and spiritual glories of the place that is above, he will learn that sinlessness is not enough—that he must be strenuous in the pursuit of positive goodness—that to lay up treasure in heaven he must become rich in all those graces that adorn and dignify the wearer—that to be received and welcomed as a member of the upper family he must acquire the family likeness, or gather upon his inner man all those features of piety and love and humbleness and temperance and purity, which go to make up a portrait of affirmative excellence, and to stamp on every desire and on every doing the expression of holiness unto the Lord.

The starting-post at which this race of virtue begins, and from which this noble career of progressive and aspiring excellence is entered on, is your freedom from condemnation through the death of Christ. It is your reckoning by faith upon this which cuts asunder that load by which the compressed and heavy-laden energies of the soul are restrained from bursting forth on a path of hopeful activity ; and it is thus that with emancipated powers now awakened to life and to liberty, you press onward to that summit of perfection to which though yet seen by you from afar, you have bent your determined course, and are ever running, as for the prize of your high calling in Christ Jesus our Lord. But to our progress on this great moral and spiritual journey the reckoning of the text is indispensable. Without this reckoning you are chained to the sluggishness of despair. With this reckoning the chain is broken, and the sluggishness is dissipated, and the faculties of the mind are not only freed, but urged and stimulated in a holy and a heavenward direction. For among the thousand other guarantees for the faith of the gospel being indeed a purifying and an inspiring faith, mark it, my brethren, that a sense of pardon will never enter believingly into the sinner's heart without its being followed up by a sense of obligation ; and gratitude to Him who

first loved you, will incite you to all that you know to be gladdening or acceptable to His bosom : And when you read, that He longs to rear all those creatures who are the travail of His soul into so many illustrious specimens of that power with which he is invested—to adorn and to sanctify those whom He has saved—how can you refuse to be a fellow-worker with Him, in striving, by all the aids of His grace, to apprehend that holiness for the sake of producing which in your spirit you have been apprehended ? How can you refuse to gratify in your own person and performance the taste of Him who ever rejoices to behold the verdure and the beauty that sit on the landscapes of materialism, and who will much more rejoice to behold in the Church of the redeemed, on which He is ever shedding the water of life from above, the unspotted loveliness of a new moral creation, that now teems with moral excellence, and rises towards that full accomplishment, when it shall be holy and without blemish before Him ?

Thus it is that the desire of Christ, and your desire, meet together in the one object of your sanctification. Let the sinner's desire for this vent itself in prayer, and let the desire of the Saviour for this go forth upon the prayer, and hand it up perfumed with the incense of His own merits to Him who sitteth on the throne ; and the descending of the Spirit on the believer's heart will make sure that regenerating process whereby he who is saved from the punishment of sin will also most certainly be saved from its power. The man who in the faith of God's testimony reckons himself a partaker of Christ's death and resurrection, is not reckoning beyond his warrant. But he who so reckons upon Christ hath received Christ ; and the mighty vantage-ground upon which he stands is, that he can now plead the declaration of God Himself, that as He hath given His own Son He will also with Him freely give all things ; and the most precious of these are the heart and the power to serve Him. It is thus that through the door of reconciliation you enter on the path of new obedience ; and still we return to this, that the very reckoning of my text is the thing which gives its first prosperous outset to the work of sanctification. It is this which brings home to the believer's heart the malignity of sin—it is this which opens to him the gate of heaven ; and disclosing to his view the glories of that upper region, teaches him that it is indeed a land of sacredness—it is this which inclines his footsteps along the path to immortality,

which the death of Christ and it alone has rendered accessible—it is this which conforms his character to that of the celestial spirits who are there before Him. For the will of Christ, whom he now loves, is that he should be like unto Him; and the grateful wish and grateful endeavour of the disciple draw forth from his labouring bosom that prayer of faith which is sure to rise with acceptance, and is sure to be answered with power.

To conclude, I shall be pleased, if as the fruit of all these explanations I have succeeded in making palpable to any understanding the great secret of what that is which constitutes the principle of evangelical obedience. The constant aim and tendency of nature is towards a legal obedience; and in the prosecution of this it is sure to land either in a spiritless formality, or in a state of fatigue and dissatisfaction and despondency, which without the faith of the gospel is utterly interminable. To believe in Christ is the way to be holy here as well as the way to be happy hereafter. A sense of peace with God through Him, when it enters the bosom, is the sure harbinger of purity there; and what you have plainly to do, that you may attain to the character of heaven, is to take up the reckoning of my text—even that the death by sin is conclusively gone through; and that the life by God being promised through Jesus Christ—the gate of heaven now stands open for your approaches through the way of holiness which leads to it. You have perhaps been practising at the work of reformation by other methods; and this is a method that may have been still untried by you. Try it now; and what can be more inviting than to begin an enterprise with such an encouragement of friendship and of patronage upon your side? The man who sets out on the track of legalism proposes to win this friendship by his obedience and to secure his patronage. But the man who sets out evangelically counts on the friendship and the patronage as already his, and avails himself of all the aids and facilities that are abundantly offered to him. Make the experiment, my brethren. Take it up as a settled point, that in Christ your condemnation is done away—that in Him your right to everlasting life is purchased and secured for you—that all the signals of honest and welcome invitation are now lifted up; and floating in the eye even of the worst of sinners, are cheering him forward to the land of uprightness—and that every influence is provided to help his movement from the character of that earth whence he is so soon to make an everlasting departure, to the character of that

now open and accessible heaven whither he is asked to bend his footsteps. Enter upon this undertaking on the footing that your reconciliation is secured, and not on the footing that your reconciliation is yet to win. On the one footing you will fight all your days at a distance from hope, and at an utterly impracticable distance from that heaven after which you are toiling so fruitlessly. Just make the attempt then on the other footing; and see whether all old things will not be done away, and all things will not become new.

LECTURE XXXIII.

ROMANS VI. 12.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof."

SOME would substitute here, in place of mortal—which signifies liable to death, the idea of our bodies being already dead in Christ, or in Him being already put to death for sin—which would just be urging us to strive against sin, and on that consideration too which I have in your hearing so repeatedly insisted upon. Let not that hateful enemy again reign over us who already brought us to the borders of execution. And here I may revert for a moment to the thought, that sin by the death of Christ in our stead hath been plucked of its sting—that our Saviour received it in His own body, and that there is no more power in our cruel adversary to inflict his mortal poison upon us—and that he is not only disarmed of his right to condemn us, but furthermore disarmed of all right and ability to tyrannize over us. In virtue of the defeat that he has gotten, he will not obtain the dominion over our hearts and wills unless we let him. If we let him not, we shall find that our resistance, backed as it is by the plea of a Saviour already crucified, and by the power of a Saviour now exalted, is greatly too much for him. We who have been baptized into Christ are somewhat in the same circumstances, with regard to our old oppressor sin, that the children of Israel, after being baptized into Moses in the Red Sea, were in reference to the power and tyranny of Egypt. Their enemy was engulfed in that abyss over which they found an open and a shielded way; and placed conclusively beyond the reach of his dominion, it was now their part to exchange the mastery of Pharaoh for the mastery of God; and those who did not acquit themselves of this their part, but rebelled against Heaven, and sighed in their hearts after the flesh-pots of Egypt, were cut off in the wilderness. And these things are recorded for our admonition on whom the latter ends of the world have

come. If truly baptized into Christ, we have with Him our Deliverer passed athwart that mighty chasm which had been else impassable; and it was in the act of opening up and traversing this deep that he who had the power of death was overthrown; and we, now placed beyond the reach of his inflictions, are to exchange the tyranny of sin for the rightful command and mastery of Him who hath borne us across from the confines of the enemy; and unless we let him, he is stript of all power of ascendancy over us—being no more able to subjugate our hearts to the influence of moral evil than he is able to subjugate our persons to its penalty. Now if he offer to reign, let us but resist and he will flee from us—whereas, if with so many aids and securities around us, and standing on the vantage-ground of a safety that has thus been obtained and thus been guaranteed, we still find our inclinations leaning towards this malignant destroyer, we shall share in the fate of the rebellious Hebrews, we shall fall short on our way to the heavenly Canaan, we shall be likened to those who fell in the wilderness.

And this analogy, which has been instituted by Paul himself in another part of his writings, does not fail us—though we should take the term ‘mortal’ in the customary, which I am also inclined to think is here the correct signification of it. While in these mortal bodies we are only on a road through the wilderness of earth to the secure and everlasting blessedness of heaven. It is true that all who are really partakers with Christ in His death have got over a mighty barrier that lay between this terrestrial Egypt and the Jerusalem that is above. They have been carried through the strait gate of acceptance, and have now to travel along the narrow way of duty and of discipline. It is most true of all who are actually through the one, that they will be borne in safety and in triumph along the other. But one may think that he is in Christ when he is not; and therefore let him who thus thinketh that he standeth take heed lest he fall. If in Christ, it is true that to him there will be no condemnation. But if in Christ, it is just in every way as true that he will walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Let us therefore make sure of our condition by so walking. Let us give all our diligence to ascertain and establish it. If we really are at a distance from the land of sin’s condemnation, we are at an equal distance from the land of sin’s thralldom and oppressive tyranny. Let us count it our business then to make head against that tyranny. Let not sin reign over us on the

passage that we have yet to describe ere we be translated to our place of secure and eternal refuge from all its entanglements. Let us stifle every rising inclination for the pleasures and the carnalities of Egypt, and come not under the power of those lusts which war against the soul, till we reach the spiritual Canaan, where every inclination to evil that we have withstood here shall cease to exist and so cease to annoy us.

We hold it of prime importance in the business of practical Christianity, that we understand well the kind of work which is put into our hands, both that we may go rightly about it, and also that we may have the comfort of judging whether it is actually making progress under our exertions. A mistake on this point may lead us perhaps to waste our efforts on that which is impracticable, and when these efforts of course turn out to be fruitless, may lead us to abandon our spirits to utter despondency; and thus, to use the language of the apostle Paul, running as uncertainly, and fighting as one that beateth the air, we may spend our days, strangers alike to peace and to progressive holiness.

Now, to save us from this hurtful mistake, it were well that we weighed the vast import of certain terms in the verse before us which are altogether big with significance. 'Let not sin,' says the apostle, 'reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.' Here we cannot fail to perceive how widely diverse the injunction of the apostle would have been, if instead of saying, 'Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies,' he had said, Let sin be rooted out of your mortal bodies; or if, instead of saying—'Obey not its lusts,' he had bid us eradicate them. It were surely a far more enviable state to have no inclination to evil at all, than to be oppressed with the constant forthputting of such an inclination, and barely to keep it in check, under the power of some opposing principle. Could we attain the higher state on this side of time, we would become on earth what angels are in heaven, whose every desire runs in the pure current of love and loyalty to a God of holiness. But if doomed to the lower state during all the days of our abode in the world, then are we given to understand that the life of a Christian is a life of vigilant and unremitting warfare—that it consists in the struggle of two adverse elements, and the habitual prevalence of one of them—that in us, and closely around us, there is a besetting enemy who will not quit his hold of us till death paralyse his grasp, and so let us go—and that from

this sore conflict of the Spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit, we shall not be conclusively delivered till our present tainted materialism shall be utterly taken down; and that the emancipated soul shall not have free and unconfined scope for its heavenly affections until it has burst its way from the prison-hold of its earthly tabernacle.

Now, this view of the matter gives us a different conception of our appointed task from what may often be imagined. Sin it would appear is not to be exterminated from our mortal bodies; it is only to be kept at bay. It is not to be destroyed in respect of its presence, but it is to be repressed in its prevalence and in its power. It will ever dwell, it would appear, in our present framework; but though it dwell, it may not have the dominion. Let us try then to banish it; and defeated in this effort, we may give up in heartless despair the cause of our sanctification, thus throwing away at once both our peace and our holiness. But let us try to dethrone it, though we cannot cast it out; and succeeding in this effort, while we mourn its hateful company, we may both keep it under the control of strictest guardianship, and calmly look onward to the hour of death as the hour of a release from a burden that will at least adhere to us all our days, though it may not overwhelm us.

We see then the difference between a saint in heaven and a saint upon earth. The former may abandon himself to such feelings and such movements as come at pleasure; for he has no other pleasure than to do the will of God, and to rejoice in the contemplation of His unspotted glory. The latter cannot with safety so abandon himself. It is true, that there is an ingredient in his nature, now under an advancing process of regeneration, which is altogether on the side of godliness; and were this left unresisted by any opposing influence, he might be spared all the agonies of dissolution, and set him down at once among the choirs and the companies of Paradise. But there is another ingredient of his nature still under an unfinished process of regeneration, and which is altogether on the side of ungodliness; and were this left without the control of his new and better principle, sin would catch the defenceless moment, and regain the ascendancy from which he had been dispossessed. Now it is death which comes in as the deliverer. It is death which frees away the incumbrance. It is death which overthrows and grinds to powder that corrupt fabric on the walls of which were inscribed the foul marks of leprosy, and the inmost ma-

terials of which were pervaded with an infection which nothing, it seems, but the sepulchral process of a resolution into dust, and a resurrection into another and glorified body, can clear completely and conclusively away. It is death that conducts us from the state of a saint on earth to the state of a saint in heaven: but not till we are so conducted are we safe to abandon ourselves for a single instant to the spontaneity of our own inclinations; and we utterly mistake our real circumstances in the world—we judge not aright of what we have to do, and of the attitude in which we ought to stand—we lay ourselves open to the assaults of a near and lurking enemy, and are exposed to most humiliating overthrows, and most oppressive visitations of remorse and wretchedness, if such being our actual condition upon earth, we go to sleep or to play among its besetting dangers; if we ever think of the post that we occupy being any other than the post of armour and of watchfulness; or falsely imagining that there is but one spiritual ingredient in our nature—altogether on the side of holiness, instead of two—whereof the other is still alive, and on the side of sin, we ever let down the guardianship, and the jealousy, and the lowliness of mind, and the prayers for succour from on high, which such a state of things so urgently and so imperiously demands.

We think it of very capital importance for us to know that the body wherewith we are burdened, and must carry about with us, is a vile body; that the nature which we received at the first, and from which we shall not be delivered on this side of the grave, is a corrupt nature; that all which is in us and about us, and that is apart from the new spirit infused through the belief of the gospel, is in a state of aversion to the will of God; that what may be denoted by the single word *carnality*, is of perpetual residence with us while upon earth; and that our distinct concern is, while it resides with us, that it shall not reign over us. It is ever present with its suggestions; and this we cannot help; but it should not prevail with its suggestions; and this, by the aids and expedients provided for the regeneration of a polluted world, we may help. We shall feel with our latest breath the motions of the flesh; and these motions, if not sins, are at least sinful tendencies, which if yielded to would terminate in sins. Now our business is not to extirpate the tendencies, but to make our stand against them—not to root out those elements of moral evil which the body of a good man before death has, and after its resurrection has not—but to stifle and to keep

them down by that force wherewith the new creature in Jesus Christ is armed for the great battle on the issue of which hangs his eternity. We cannot obtain such a victory as that we shall never feel the motions of the flesh; but we may obtain such a victory as that we shall not walk after the flesh. The enemy is not so killed as that we are delivered from his presence; but by an unremitting strenuousness on our part we may keep him so chained as that we shall be delivered from his power. Such is the contest, and such is the result of the contest, if it be a successful one. But we ought to be told that it is a vain hope, while we live in the world, to look for the extermination of the sinful principle. It ever stirs and actuates within us; and there is not one hour of the day in which it does not give token that it is still alive, and though cast down from its ascendancy not destroyed in its existence. Forewarned forearmed; and it is right to be informed that near us and within us there is at all times an insidious foe, against whom we cannot guard too vigilantly, and against whom we cannot pray too fervently and too unremittingly.

The time is coming, when without the felt counteraction of any adverse and opposing tendency, we shall expatiate in freedom over the realms of ethereal purity and love—just as the time is coming when the chrysalis shall burst with unfettered wing from the prison in which it is now held, and where we doubt not it is aspiring and growing into a meetness for traversing at large the field of light and air that is above it. The Christian on earth so aspires and so grows; but Christian though he be, there is on him the heaviness of a gross and tainted materialism, which must be broken down ere his spiritual tendencies can expand into their full and final development. Meanwhile there is the compression upon him of downward and earthward and carnal tendencies, which will never be removed till he die; but which he must resist, so as that they shall not reign over him. There are lusts which he cannot eradicate but which he must not obey; and while he deplores, in humility and shame, the conscious symptoms within him of a nature so degraded, it is his business, by the energies and resources of the new nature, so to starve and weaken and mortify the old man, as that it may linger into decay while he lives, and when he dies may receive the stroke of its full annihilation.

This representation of a believer's state upon earth is in accordancy with Scripture. We find the apostle stating, that the

flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh ; and in such a way too as that the man cannot do what he would. He would serve God more perfectly. He would render Him an offering untinged by the frailty of his fallen nature. He would rise to the seraphic love of the upper paradise, and fain be able to consecrate to the Eternal the homage of a heart so pure that no earthly feculence shall be felt adhering to it. But all this he cannot—and why? Because of a drag that keeps him, with all his soaring aspirations, among the dust of a perishable world. There is a counterpoise of secularity within that at least damps and represses the sacredness ; and it is well if it do not predominate over it. This secularity belongs to the old nature, being so very corrupt that Paul says of it—“In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing.” There is a law, then, which warreth against the law of our mind, even while that mind is delighting inwardly in the law of God. The conflict is so exceedingly severe, that even they who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan inwardly, while waiting for the redemption of the body, and for a translation into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Burdened with the mass of a rebellious nature, the apostle exclaims—“O wretched man that I am ! who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?” Even grace, it would appear, does not deliver from the residence of sin ; for Paul complains most emphatically of his vile body, and, we have no doubt, would so have stigmatized it to the last half-hour of his existence in the world. But grace still does something. It delivers from the reign of sin, so that we do not obey its motions, though vexed and annoyed with the feeling of them. And accordingly, from the exclamation of “O wretched man !” does he pass in a moment to the grateful exclamation of, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” in whom it is that we walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

From such a representation as is given by the apostle of Indwelling Sin we may deduce some distinct practical lessons, which may be of use to the believer.

First, We think it conducive to the peace of a believer that he is made aware of what he has to expect of the presence of corruption during his stay in this the land of immature virtue ; and where the holiness of the new-born creature has to struggle its way through all those adverse elements which nought but death will utterly remove from him. It must serve to allay the disturbance of his spirit, when pierced and humbled under the

consciousness of an evil desire and wicked principle still lurking within him, and announcing themselves to be yet alive by the instigations which they are ever prompting, and the thoughts which they are ever suggesting to the inner man. It is his business to resist the instigations, and to turn away from the thoughts; and thus the old nature may be kept in practical check, though as to its being it is not exterminated. Yet the very occurrence of a sinful desire, or an impure feeling, harasses a delicate conscience; for no such occurrence happens to an angel, or to the spirit of a just man made perfect in heaven; and he may be led to suspect his interest in the promises of Christ, when he is made to perceive that there is in him still so much of what is uncongenial to godliness. It may therefore quiet him to be told that he is neither an angel nor a glorified saint, and that there is a distinction between the saint who is struggling at his appointed warfare below and the saint who is resting and rejoicing in the full triumph of his victory above; and the distinction announces itself by those very intimations which so perplex and so grieve him—just by the felt nearness of that corrupt propensity which is the plague of his heart, which it is his bounden duty to keep his guard against, and which, with his new-born sensibilities on the side of holiness, he will detest and mourn over—but not be overwhelmed in despair on account of it, as if some strange thing had happened to him, or as if any temptation had come in his way which was not common to all his brethren who are in the world.

But, secondly, this view of the matter not only serves to uphold the peace of a believer but conduces also to his progress in holiness; for it leads to a most wholesome distrust of himself, under the consciousness that there is still a part about him most alive to sin; and which, if not watched and guarded and kept under severe and painful restraint, would be wholly given over to it. And here there is a striking accordancy between the theoretical view which the Bible gives of our nature and the practical habit it labours to impress upon all who partake of it. An angel perhaps does not need to be warned against the exposure of himself to temptation; for there may be no ingredient in his constitution that can be at all affected by it: but not so with man, compounded as he is, and made up as his constitution is here of two great departments, one of which is prone to evil, and that continually; and in the other of which lie all those principles and powers whose office it is, if not utterly to extin-

guish this proneness, at least to repress its outbreakings. In these circumstances, it is assuredly not for man to thrust himself into a scene of temptation; and when the alternative is at his own will, whether he shall shun the encounter or shall dare it, his business is to shun, and the whole of Scripture is on the side of cautiousness rather than of confidence in this matter; and we may be assured that it is our part, in every case, to expose nothing, and to hazard nothing, unless there be a call of duty, which is tantamount to a call of Providence. When the trial is of our own bringing on we have no warrant to hope for a successful issue. God will grant succour and support against the onsets which temptation maketh upon us, but He does not engage Himself to stand by us in the presumptuous onsets which we make upon temptation. We better consult the mediocrity of our powers, and better suit our habits to the real condition of our ruined and adulterated nature, when we keep as far as in us lies our determined distance from every allurements—when with all our might we restrain our tendencies to evil within from coming into contact with the excitements to evil that are without—when we make a covenant with our eyes to turn them away from the sight of vanity—and whether the provocation be to anger, or evil speaking, or intemperance, or any wayward and vicious indulgence whatever, let us be assured that we cannot be too prompt in our alarms, or too early in our measures, whether of prevention or resistance; and that in every one instance where we have it in our power, and no dereliction of duty is implied, it is our wise and salutary part, not most resolutely to face the provocative, but most resolutely to flee from it.

But, thirdly, this view of the matter not only leads us to withdraw the vicious and wrong part of our constitution from every encounter with temptation that can possibly be shunned—it also leads us to such measures as may recruit and strengthen the gracious or good part of our constitution for every such encounter as cannot be shunned. For we must, in spite of all our prudence, have many such encounters in the world. Temptation will come to our door, though we should never move a single unguarded footstep towards temptation; and then, what, we would ask, is the armour or resistance?—what the best method of upholding the predominance of the good principle over the evil one? We would say, a fresh commitment of ourselves in faith and in prayer to Him who first put the good principle

into our hearts—another act of recurrence to the fulness that is in Christ Jesus—a new application for strength from the Lord our Sanctifier, to meet this new occasion for strength which He Himself has permitted to come in our way, and to cross the path of our history in the world. The humility which leads us to flee whenever we can, and to pray when flight is impossible—this is the very habit of the soul, which removes it from the first set of temptations, and will most effectually strengthen it against the second. To the proud man, who reckons upon his own capabilities, God refuses grace. To the humble man, who in himself has no other feeling than that of utter emptiness, God gives grace in abundant measure for all his necessities; and thus it is, that by proceeding as he ought, on the consideration that there is a part of his nature belonging properly and originally to himself, which he must keep at an assiduous distance from every excitement to evil; and then proceeding as he ought on the consideration that there is a part of his nature derived by grace from heaven, and nourished by constant supplies from the same quarter—thus it is, we say, that his knowledge of his own constitution, such as we have endeavoured to unfold it, has a direct tendency both to deepen the humility of the believer and to exalt and perfect his holiness.

It is this state of composition, in every one who has been born of the Spirit, between the old man and the new creature, which explains the mystery of a Christian being more humble just as he becomes more holy—of his growing at one and the same time in dissatisfaction with himself, and in those deeds of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ—of his being both more feelingly alive to the corruption that is in him from one part of his nature, and more fruitfully abundant in all those virtues which have their soil and their nutriment from the other part of his nature, so as to hold out the palpable exhibition of one evidently rising in positive excellence, and yet as evidently sinking into a profounder self-abasement than before; as if it required a so much deeper foundation to uphold the ascending superstructure. The truth is, that wherever there is any real growth of morality there must be a growth of moral sensibility along with it; and in proportion to this sensibility will there be the annoyance that is felt, and the touching grief and humility wherewith the heart is visited on every fresh evolution of that depraved nature which is subordinated, but not yet extinguished and done away. And hence the want of sympathy and the

want of understanding between the children of this world and the children of light; and the misinterpretation that is sometimes given to the pains and perplexities and mental disquietudes which the latter do experience; and the puzzling appearance of inconsistency which is held out by the emotions and the exercises of a real Christian, who is troubled on every side, yet not distressed—perplexed, but not in despair—persecuted, but not forsaken—cast down, but not destroyed; bearing about in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus might be made manifest in his body—dying unto earthly honours and earthly gratifications, while the life of Jesus is becoming manifest in his mortal flesh.

To conclude then, let sin reside as he may, he must not be permitted to reign. He may be put up with as a most offensive and unpleasant inmate in the house—but let him be curbed and guarded, and not one item of authority be conceded to him. It is enough that we have to bear his hateful presence, but his tyranny is not to be tolerated. Against this there is ever to be upheld a manful and strenuous and persevering resistance. He may distress, but he is not to influence us. There will be a constant prompting on his part to that which is evil; but the evil thing is not to be done, and the desire which incites to that thing is not to be obeyed. This is the strong and visible line of demarcation between the wilful sinner and the aspiring saint. Both of them have vile bodies charged with the elements of corruption, and impregnated with a moral virus, the working of which is towards sin and ungodliness. Both have one and the same constitutional tendency. But the one follows that tendency, the other resists it; and as the fruit of that resistance, though not freed from its detested presence, he is at least emancipated from its domineering power. It lives in the house, but it is not master of the house; and it is there so starved and buffeted, and subjected to such perpetual thwarting and mortification of every sort, that it gradually languishes and becomes weaker, until at length, with the life of the natural body, it utterly expires. The soul which acquiesced in its dominion has been sowing all along to the flesh, and of the flesh it shall reap corruption. The soul that struggled against its dominion, and refused compliance therewith, has through the Spirit mortified the deeds of the body and shall live—has all along been sowing to the Spirit, and of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting.

LECTURE XXXIV.

ROMANS VI. 13, 14.

“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin : but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you : for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”

You will observe in the term ‘yield’ of the present verse a counterpart to the term ‘reign’ of the last verse. We have not been enjoined to root out sin as to its presence ; but we have been enjoined so to resist as that it shall not reign over us in power. And in like manner we are not called upon to excise from our members their evil tendency to unrighteousness ; but we are called upon not to yield them up as instruments of unrighteousness. Could Paul have excised from his members their inclination to sin, he would have done it ; and then he would not have had to complain afterwards in the bitterness of his soul, that he found a law in these members warring against the law of his mind—neither would he have said that in him, that is, in his flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. But the truth is, that after conversion the organs of the body stand in the same relation as before to the objects that are suited to them—the natural influence of the one upon the other is just what it was—there is a power of temptation in the one and a disposition to coalesce therewith in the other, neither of which is extricated by grace, either from the constitution of the man or from the constitution of outward nature. But what grace does is to stir up a resolve in the mind against submitting to this influence, against yielding to this temptation. And so there comes to be a law in the mind warring against the law that is in the members—a new will that aspires, if not to such a sovereignty as can carry into effect a sentence of expulsion against the evil desires that are in the members, at least to such a sovereignty as shall lay upon these desires an effectual negative—so that if they cannot be got quit of while we are in the body, as so many troublesome companions, they may at least be deposed from the practical ascend-

ency they desire to wield over us as so many tyrannical lords and oppressors. Like the whole of a wilful and stubborn team that have a perverse tendency to deviation, would they run into disorder on the reins being yielded to them; but in virtue of the strength and determination of the governor the reins are not given up; and so, though with much tension and fatigue and watchfulness, are they kept on the proper course. The difference between such a management and another where all the animals under command go smoothly and vigorously along in the very path of service that you desire, is another mode of exemplifying the difference that there is between the work of a saint on earth and the work of a saint in heaven. On earth you have to maintain the guiding and governing power of the mind over not willing but reluctant subjects, who, if permitted to take their own way, would run off to the by-paths of unrighteousness—and whom you are required by my text not to yield up as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin.

There is a love of gossip in our nature, partly due to its malignity, and partly due to its taste for the ridiculous, and in virtue of which there may be an urgent tendency, in the midst of an easy circle of companionship, to come forth with some of those more exquisite traits of a neighbour's folly the recital of which would impart a zest to the conversation. To make use of a very familiar phrase indeed, you have sometimes a minor calumny of this sort on your tongue's end; and certain it is of such an inclination that it will not only survive the passage of the soul from a state of nature to a state of grace—but it is an inclination, we know, often given way to in many a brotherhood and many a sisterhood of commonplace professorship. Well then, suppose that on the eve of its escape a sudden remembrance of the verse which interdicts—not certain of the more flagrant and aggravated—but which interdicts *all* evil speakings whatever, should come into the mind; and the will—that power which sits in the chair of authority—should of consequence interpose, and lay its arrest on the offending member, and bind it over to a peace which it feels strongly nevertheless tempted to violate—it is quite compatible with the man's Christianity, that he should have about him still a part of a constitution to which the utterance of a thoughtless story were a pleasurable indulgence—it is quite compatible with his Christianity that this is a temptation, and he should feel it to be so; but it is not worthy of his vocation, while sensible of its force, that he should actually and indeed submit to the force:

and his part is resolutely to put forth his hand on the reins of management, and not yield his members as an instrument of unrighteousness unto sin.

‘But yield yourselves unto God.’ Amid the clamour and besetting importunity of the various affections of our nature, there is the will, whose consent must be obtained and whose authority must be given, ere any one of the affections shall be gratified. It is true that the will may be the slave of unworthy passions, just as a monarch may be the slave of unworthy favourites. But still it is from the monarch that the order is issued. And he must set his seal to it ere it can be carried into effect. It may be a base compliance in him to grant what he does to the urgency of his profligate and parasitical minions. But still his grant is indispensable; and the same of the will among all the other feelings and faculties of the human constitution. It may be in actual abject subordination to the appetites; and through it the whole man may be lorded over by a set of most ignoble though most oppressive taskmasters. Yet the moment that the will shall determine to cast off this ascendancy, like as when a monarch dismisses his favourites, their power is at an end; and should the will resolve for God, this were tantamount to our yielding up of the whole man to the will and authority of God. It may do so by one act, and yet that act be the transition of the whole man into another habit, and the passing of the soul under another regimen than before. Though one step only, it is indeed a great and a decisive one. It is the great introductory movement to a new life—nor can we figure a mightier crisis, or a more pregnant turning-point in your personal history, than is that resolve of the mind by which it resolves effectually for God, by which it yields itself up unto Him with full purpose of heart and endeavour after new obedience.

And this one act—brooding as it does with consequences of such moment, both in time and in eternity—we are called upon in the clause now under consideration to perform. The man who enlists himself into soldiery may do it in a single instant; and that fixes him down for life to the obedience of a new master. What I want to gain is your resolution of entrance into the perpetual service of God—that you purpose now to give no more of your time to the lusts of the flesh, but to His will—that the posture now of readiness for His commands, and determination to obey them, be at this moment assumed by you—that you now give the consent of your will—that great master faculty of

the inner man—to your being henceforth the subject of God's authority whatever may be its requirements—that listening, as it long has, to sin and to sense and to selfishness, you make it now your deliberate and steadfast aim to resist all the suggestions of these troublesome and treacherous advisers; and in their place you enthrone the great principle of—‘Lord, what wilt Thou me to do?’ All these are just so many other ways of expressing that greatest of all practical movements by which a man yields himself up unto God—a movement which, if not taken, leaves you still in the broad way among the children of disobedience, and either marks you to be still an utter stranger to the doctrine of Christ, or if you be acquainted with that doctrine, marks—and most decisively—that it is a doctrine which has come to you in word only and not in power.

Be assured, my brethren, that in proportion to the strength and the simplicity of your determination for God will be the clearness of your Christianity and the comfort attendant on all its hopes and all its promises. It is the man whose eye is single whose whole body shall be full of light. You complain of darkness, do you? See that there be not a want of perfect oneness and willingness and sincerity as to the total yielding of yourself unto God. The entanglement of one wrong and worldly affection may mar your purposes. The influence of one forbidden conformity may do it. To the right following of Christ there must be the forsaking of all. He must be chosen as the alone master; nor will He accept of a partial yielding up of yourselves. It must be an entire and unexcepted yielding. Nor is there anything so likely as the doublings of a wavering and undecided purpose to wrap the gospel in obscurity, and throw a darkening shroud over all that truth which ministers peace and joy to the believer's soul.

And I trust that you are now prepared to meet a difficulty which is sometimes suggested when the Christian disciple is urged on to perfection. You are now aware of the utter hopelessness that there is in the attempt to extirpate the presence of sin; but this, so far from discouraging, ought rather to excite you to the uttermost strenuousness in the work of making head against its power. In such a state of matters, there may at least be a pure and perfect and honest-hearted aim—though there will not be so perfect an accomplishment as if all the sinful appetites were eradicated, instead of all these appetites being only kept in order. The purpose of the mind may be sound—

the full set of the inner man, which delights in the law of God, may be towards obedience to that law; and thus there may be a perfect surrendering yourselves up unto the service of God, though not so perfect an execution of the service itself as if you had no vile body of sin and of death to contend against. The charioteer whose horses have a strong sideway direction may be as thoroughly intent on the object of keeping his vehicle on the road, as he whose horses would of themselves and without even the guidance of the reins keep an unfaltering direction in the right path. And he may also succeed in keeping them on, though they neither move so easily, or smoothly, or quickly. The perfection of aim is the same in both—though the one must put forth a more painful and not so successful an endeavour as the other. And it is just in this way that I call on you, with the full set of all your purposes and energies, steadfastly to keep and carefully to describe the career of a new obedience. God, who knoweth your constitution, knoweth how to distinguish between a failing in the purpose and a failing in the performance. He calls for singleness and perfectness and godly sincerity in the one. He is aware of your frame, and is touched with the feeling of your infirmities, and knows when He consistently with the rules of His unerring government may pass by the shortcomings of the other. And thus while encouraged to confess and pray over the remembrance of certain sins in the hope that they may be forgiven—we are also taught that there is a sin which will not be forgiven, there is a sin unto death.

See that in yielding yourselves unto God it be a perfect surrender that you make. See that you give yourself wholly over to His service. I am not asking at present how much you can do; but go to the service with the feeling that your all is due, and with the honest intention and desire that all shall be done. Let there be no vitiating compromise between sin and duty in the principle of your actions—whatever the degree of soil or of shortness in the actions themselves. Enter upon your new allegiance to God with a full desire to acquit yourselves of all its obligations; and thus it is that without reservation you may take Him to be your liege Sovereign—and that without reservation you may yield yourselves up unto God.

Then follows a very important clause—‘as those who are alive from the dead.’ It cuts up legalism by the roots. To work legally is to work for life—to work evangelically is to work from

life. When you set forth on the work of obedience in the one way, you do it to attain a life that you have not. When you set forth on the work of obedience in the other way, you do it in the exercise and from the energies of a life that you already have. Which is the way of the text is perfectly obvious. You are not here called upon to enter the service of God as those who have life to win; but to enter the service of God as those who are already alive—as those who can count upon heaven as their own, and with a sense of God's loving favour in their hearts and a prospect of glory eternal in their eye, put themselves under the authority of that gracious Parent who guides and cheers and smiles upon them along the path of preparation.

In this single expression there are three distinct things suggested to our attention; and all of them standing connected with that new gospel service upon which we enter at the moment of our release from the sentence and the state of death.

There is first the hopefulness of such a service. The same work that out of Christ would have been vain for all the purposes of acceptance—is no longer vain in the Lord. The same labour that would have been fruitless when, toiling in our yet unredeemed state of condemnation, we would have toiled as if in the very fire and found nothing—may now be fruitful of such spiritual sacrifices as are acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. The same offerings which would have been rejected as an equivalent for the wages of a servant, may now be rejoiced over, and minister complacency to the spirit of our heavenly Father when rendered as the attentions of one whom He has admitted into the number of His recalled and reconciled children. Yield yourselves up unto God then, not as one who has to earn life, but as one who has already gotten life from His hands; and your obedience, divested of all legal jealousies and fears, will be free and spontaneous on the part of the creature—and on the part of the Creator will be sustained as worthy of Himself to receive, for the sake of that great High Priest whose merits and whose intercession and whose death have poured a consecration over the services of all that believe on Him.

There is secondly in this expression the principle of such a service—even gratitude to Him who has received us. It puts us in mind of these precious Scriptures—"We are not our own, we are bought with a price; let us therefore glorify the Lord with our body and our spirit, which are the Lord's." And "if Christ died for all, then were all dead; and he died, that they

who live might live no longer to themselves, but to him who died for them, and who rose again." It is just yielding up to Him in service that which He has conferred upon us by donation. It is turning to its bidden use the instrument He has put into our hands. It is giving Him His own; and you, in yielding yourselves up unto God as those who are alive from the dead, are just yielding the appropriate return of gratitude for the life that has thus been bestowed upon you.

And lastly, in this expression there is implied the power for the service. The faith which receives Christ receives power along with Him to become one of God's children. It of itself argues a spiritual perception of which nought but spiritual life can make us capable. The instant of our believing is the instant of our new birth. The same faith which reconciles is also the faith which regenerates; and you, in yielding yourselves up unto the service of God, will be nobly upheld among all its fatigues and all its difficulties by the influences which descend on the prayer of faith from the upper sanctuary.

'And your members as the instruments of righteousness unto God.' You see how readily and how naturally the apostle descends from the high principle to the plain work of obedience. To yield yourselves unto God is a brief expression of that act by which you submit your person and bind over all your performances to His will. To yield your members as the instruments of righteousness unto God, is, in the language of lawyers, like an extension of the brief. It is implementing the great and initiatory deed of your dedication to His service. It is going forth on the business to which you have come engaged, and actually doing in the detail what you before solemnly and honestly purposed to do in the general. Did you at one time put forth your hand to depredation or violence—now let it be the instrument of service to your neighbour, and honest labour for your families. Or did your feet carry you to the haunts of profligacy—let them now carry you to the house of prayer and of holy companionship. Or did your tongue utter forth the evil speakings, whether of calumny or carelessness or profanation—let it now be the organ of charity and peace, and let the salt of grace season its various communications. Or did your eyes go abroad in quest of foolishness—let the steadfast covenant now be made with them, that, with shrinking and sensitive purity, they may be turned away from every obtruding evil. Or did

you give your ears to the corrupting jest, and what perhaps is most corrupting of all, to the refined converse that is impregnated with taste and intellect and literature and every charm but that of Christianity—let them now be given up in obedience to the lessons of eternal wisdom, and to the accents which fall from those who fear the Lord and talk often together of His name. In this way you turn your members into so many instruments of righteousness. You give up your bodies as well as your spirits a living sacrifice unto God. The holiness that has been germinated in the heart is sent forth to the visible walk, and inscribed in characters upon the history that may be read and seen of all men. By yielding yourselves unto God you enlist in His service. By yielding your members as instruments of righteousness unto God, you go about the service. You carry out into deed and into development what before existed only in design. By yielding yourselves you subscribe the indenture. By yielding your members you act upon this indenture. By the one you undertake in all things for the glory of God. By the other you do all things to His glory. The one shows me that the will—that sovereign among the faculties—is for obedience. The other demonstrates that the will has made good her sovereignty by showing me the person on the way of obedience.

Be assured that you have not yielded up yourselves, if you have not yielded up your members; or that the heart is not right, if the history is not right. And on the other hand, be assured that the honesty, and the frugality, and the temperance, and the scrupulous abstinence from all evil communications, and all the other every-day duties of every-day life, have a high place in religion; that when done unto God they reflect an influence on the source from which they emanate—adding to the light and spirituality of the believer; and though only the doings of his outer, yet serve to build up his inner man in faith and in holiness.

Ver. 14.—Compare the promise that sin shall not reign over you with the precept of two verses ago—"let not sin reign over you," and it will throw light on a very interesting connexion, even on the way in which the precepts of the gospel and the promises of the gospel stand related the one to the other. The promise does not supersede the precept. "I will give you a new heart and a new spirit," He says in one place; "Make you a

new heart and a new spirit," He says in another. "God worketh in you both to will and to do," in one place; in another, "Work out your own salvation." It is precisely in the same way that He bids the man of withered hand stretch it forth. The man could not unless power had been given; but he made the attempt, and he found the power. The attempt, or an act of obedience on the part of the man, was indispensable. The power, or an act of bestowment on the part of God, was also indispensable. They both met; and the performance of the bidden movement was the result of it. Had the man made the attempt without the power, there would have been no stretching forth; or had the man got the power and not made the attempt, there would have been as little of stretching forth. It was the concurrence of the one with the other at the instant, that gave rise to the doing of the thing which was required of him. And so of all gospel obedience. "Let not sin reign," "for sin shall not reign"—is in perfect accordancy with "work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you." It is God's part to lodge the gift, but it is your part to stir it up. Stir up the gift that is in you, says Paul. If no gift be there nothing will follow. If the gift be there—your exertion turns it to its right use, and works out the right and proper effect of it. It is thus that divine grace and human activity are in perfect co-operation—the one as sovereign as if man had nothing to do—the other as indispensable as if it had been left to man to do all. The grace, so far from superseding the activity, gives it all its encouragement—for without the grace the activity were powerless, and you would soon cease from it in all the heartlessness of despair; and thus it is that the precept of—"Let not sin reign over you," finds a stimulus instead of a soporific in the promise that "sin shall not reign over you."

And the reason alleged for sin not reigning over you, is, that you are not under the law but under grace. The law is the creditor of all who are under it, and sin is the debt which presses you down with a force which you cannot cast off; and you may conceive the debt to be of magnitude so overwhelming, that you not only are unable for the slightest liquidation of its principal, but that, unable for its constantly accumulating interest, you cannot live without every day adding to the burden of it. And thus it is with sin—a most fearful reckoning of past guilt against you, and an hourly augmenting guilt, by

which the law is arming every day with a greater strength of rightful severity, that it may wreak on the culprits who have offended it. It has you in its power, even as the creditor has his victims, who can only be rescued from his grasp by the interposition of an able and an adequate surety. And for us sinners there has been precisely such an interposition. The law has been treated with by one who has rendered it ample satisfaction—in that He both magnified it and made it honourable. He has rescued us from the challenge which because of sin the law would have preferred against us; and sin ceases to have the dominion because the power of laying on the penalty is now done away. But this is not all. The grace of the gospel, under which you now are, has done more than sweep away the condemnation of sin. It has struck an effectual blow at its practical ascendancy over you. It has provided a spirit that puts into you another taste and other inclinations than those you had formerly. The law had power over your person, but not over your will—so that it combined the tormentor with the tyrant, in that it was ever thwarting your desires, whose rebelliousness on the other hand was ever aggravating your guilt. But grace has delivered your person from the law; and, most delightful of all masteries! it has softened and subdued your wills—and so, causing you to love the way of holiness, has turned your duty into an enjoyment. It has done more than the surety who only liquidates the debt, and perhaps leaves you as thriftless and idle and improvident as before for new debts and new difficulties. But it has acted like the surety, who not only pays all for you, but supplies you with the means of future independence; and teaches you the management for turning them to the best account; and watches over your proceedings with the assiduity and advices of a friend whose presence ever delights instead of offending you, and charms you by his own example into the sobriety and industry and good conduct which form the best guarantees for your prosperity in this world. Thus, we say, does the grace of the gospel not only disenthral the soul of man from the bondage of guilt, but enriching it with other desires and other faculties than before, causes it to prosper and to be in health, and to abound in those fruits of the Spirit against which there is no law.

Let me just urge then in conclusion, that you proceed on the inseparable alliance which the gospel has established between your deliverance from the penalty of sin and your deliverance

from its power—that you evidence the interest you have in the first of these privileges, by a life graced and exalted by the second of them—that you now break forth as emancipated creatures whose bonds have been loosed, and from whom the fetters of corruption have been struck off along with the fetters of condemnation. You may say, that it is preaching to the dead, to bid you move and bestir yourselves towards the path of holiness—but not if faith accompany the utterance, for in that case power and life will go along with it. Like the withered hand you will perform the gesture that is required of you at the hearing of our voice—if the Spirit of all grace lend His efficacy to the word that is spoken, and actuate you with that belief in the gospel record, which strengthens as well as saves, and which sanctifies as well as justifies.

LECTURE XXXV.

ROMANS VI. 15-18.

“What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

You will perceive that in the fifteenth verse, the apostle reiterates the objection that was made at the outset of the chapter, where it is said—“What! shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”—the same objection, but grounded on a distinct consideration, or on a consideration differently expressed at least in the fifteenth verse, where it is said, ‘What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace?’ It strikes me that the apostle, when treating this question as put at the first, has in his eye the grace that pardons; and in his reply he urges the inconsistency of creatures, who for sin had been adjudged to die, but through the death of another had been recalled to life again, ever recurring in the habit of their practice to that which brought upon them so sore a condemnation. By the time he arrives at that point in the progress of his argument where we now are, he had asked them to resist the power of sin and to give themselves up unto the service of God; and was encouraging them with the prospect of success in this new plan of life, on the assurance that this power of sin was not unconquerable, but that, instead of its prevailing over them they should be enabled to prevail over it, because instead of being under the law they were now under grace. And we have no doubt that there was here a reference, not to grace as it pardons, but to grace as it purifies. There is another passage in his writings, where he tells us what that circumstance is which denotes a man to be not under the law: “But if ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” To be taken under the leading of the Spirit is to be taken under grace—even that grace which paid the debt of our souls and is now upholding them in spiritual subsistence. What is the consequence of

the Spirit's leading, or what is the fruit of it?—why, that we are led to the preference and the practice of all those virtues which enter into the composition of true moral excellence, of which the apostle gives us the enumeration by such specific terms as love and peace and joy and gentleness and goodness and long-suffering and faith and meekness and temperance, against which, says he, there is no law. The grace which delivered us from the reckoning of the law because of our past delinquencies, delivers us also from the future reckonings of the law, by introducing us to such a character and such a conduct as even the law has nothing to allege against; and so the circumstance of being under grace, so far from leading us to sin, leads us just in the opposite direction—leads us to that domain of righteousness which is not under the law, and that because there the law finds no occasion on which it might put forth its authority to condemn; and there its authority to issue orders is not called for, because it is in fact anticipated by the heaven-born affection which does not wait for its commands, by the heaven-born taste which delights in the doing of them.

Ver. 16.—There may appear a sort of unmeaning and uncalled-for tautology in this verse—a something not very close or consequential, and which it is difficult to seize upon. The apostle had already asked them not to yield themselves unto the obedience of sin, but to yield themselves unto the obedience of God. If it were a real and effectual yielding of themselves to the obedience of God, an actual course of obedience to God would emerge from it. If it were but the semblance of thus yielding, or the putting forth of a warm but unsteadfast purpose which was not adhered to and not followed up—then would they still continue in the obedience of sin. ‘Now,’ says the apostle, ‘you are the servants of him whom you indeed obey—not the servants of him whom you only profess to obey.’ You may have engaged yourselves to one master—you may have gone through the form of yielding yourselves up unto him—you may perhaps have deluded yourselves into the imagination that you have made good your surrender unto his will and unto his authority; but still, if, in the fact and in the real history, you obey another—you prove by this that you are indeed the servants of that other. He who sins is the servant of sin; and the effect of that service is death. He who obeys is the servant of obedience; and the effect of that service is personal righteousness, or personal meetness for the realms of life everlasting.

You may have made a dedication of yourselves unto one of these masters; but you are the servants of the other master, if him you actually serve. And perhaps the best way of seizing on the sense of the apostle in this verse, is just to substitute 'whomsoever' for 'whom' in the first clause of it, when the whole would run thus:—'Know ye not, that to whomsoever ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye do actually obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' I have already told you of your release from condemnation by the death of Christ; and I have told you how monstrously out of all proper character it were, that, after readmittance into the bosom of that accepted family from which sin and sin alone had exiled you, you should again recur to the service of sin; and under the impression of this sentiment, I have bidden you yield yourselves up unto the service of God. And to encourage you the more, have proclaimed in your hearing the helps and the facilities which grace hath provided for speeding you onward in the accomplishment of this service; and when, after all this, you ask me—Shall I sin then because of this grace—I answer, No. If you do so, it will prove that the yielding not unto sin but unto God, which I have just enjoined on you, has in fact been no yielding at all—you have made perhaps a form of dedication, but it is by your after-doings, and by these alone, that we are to estimate the truth and the power of it. The grace which you allege, as the plea of exemption from God's service, is the very argument on which I found my expectation, that the path of His service is the very place on which I shall now be sure to meet you—for it is this grace which gives the power. There would be no wanting of it to substantiate your dedication, if the dedication itself were a heartily sound and sincere one. For a man to say, shall I sin because I am under grace?—is in every way as preposterous as it were for a sick servant that had long been disabled from work but was now recovered, to say, shall I spend my time in idleness or mischief, now that I have gotten health for the labours of my employment? Such a use of his newly-gotten health would prove that he had not honestly engaged for the interests of that master whose servant he professes himself to be; and just so of the application to which it is proposed that grace, that mighty restorer of health to the soul, shall be turned—if you are not actually in the service of God but of sin, it proves that you have not honestly yielded yourselves unto God.

Ver. 17, 18.—Thus the question, Whose servants are ye? resolves itself into a matter of fact; and is decided, not by the circumstance of your having made a dedication of yourselves unto God, but by the way in which this is followed up by the doings of obedience. Whosoever he may be to whom you profess that you are servants, you are the real servants of him whom you obey; and the apostle, on looking to his disciples, pronounces them by this text to have become the servants of righteousness. He knows what they were in time past, and he compares it with what they are now. They were the servants of sin—they are now the servants of righteousness. They not only made a show of yielding themselves up in obedience unto this new master; but they make him to be indeed their master, by their in deed and in truth obeying him. And he not only affirms this change of service on the part of his disciples, but he assigns the cause of it. They obeyed from the heart. There might have been an apparent surrender, but which the inner man did not go along with. There might have been the form of a yielding; but some secret reservations, some tacit compromise of which perhaps the man was scarcely if at all conscious, some latent duplicity, that marred the deed, and brought a flaw unto it by which it was invalidated. There may have been something like a prostration of the soul to the new principle that now claims an ascendancy over it; but there must have been a failing or drawback somewhere. All had not been sound at the core—some want of perfect cordiality about it, that explains why there should have been the semblance of a yielding unto one master, but the actual service of another. Now God be thanked, says the apostle, this is not the way with you. I look at your fruit, and I find it the fruit of holiness. I look at your life, and I find it to be the life of the servants of God. I compare you now with what I know you to have been formerly; and I find such a practical change as convinces me, that whereas sin was formerly your master, righteousness is now your master in deed and in truth. And the account he gives of this is, that the yielding which they made of themselves was a sincere and honest yielding. The great master act of obedience which they rendered at that time was obedience from the heart; and thus it turned out that what was truly and singly transacted there sent forth an impulse of power upon their habits and their history.

But what is it that they are said here to obey from the heart? It is called in our translation the form of doctrine. Now we

know that the term 'doctrine' in the original may signify the thing taught, or it may signify the process of teaching. In the last sense it is synonymous with instruction; and instruction, or a process of it, may embrace many items, and may consist of several distinct parts, and be variegated with lessons of diverse sort—to obey which from the heart is just to take them all in with the simplicity and good faith in which a child reads, and believingly reads, the exercises of its task-book. And this view of the matter is very much confirmed by the import of the Greek word corresponding to *form* in our English translation. It is the same with a mould, which impresses its own precise shape however formed, and conveys its own precise devices however multiplied, to the soft and yielding substance whereunto it is applied. And it is further remarkable, that it would be still more accordant with the original—if, instead of its being said that they obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine which had been delivered to them, it had been rendered, that they obeyed from the heart the mould or model of doctrine into which they had been delivered. The image seems taken from the practice of casting liquefied metal into a mould, whereby the cast and the mould are made the accurate counterparts of each other. Christian truth, in its various parts and various prominences, is likened unto a mould, into which the heart or soul of man is cast, that it may come out a precise transcript of that which has been applied to it. Did the melted lead only touch the mould at one point, it would not receive the shape that was designed to be impressed upon it; or if the surface of the one adhered to the surface of the other only throughout a certain extent, and not at all the parts, neither yet would there be an accurate similitude between the copy and the model. It is by the closeness and the contact of the two all over, and by the yielding of the one softened throughout for the whole impression of the other, that the one takes on the very shape and the very lineaments which it is the purpose of the other to convey.

And such ought to be the impression which the heart of man receives from the word of God. It should be obedient to every touch, and yield itself to every character that is graven thereupon. It should feel the impression, not from one of its truths only, but from all of them—else, like the cast which is in contact with the mould but at a single point, it will shake and fluctuate, and be altogether wanting in settled conformity to that with the likeness of which it ought to be everywhere encompassed. You

know how difficult it is to poise one body upon another when it has only got one narrow place to stand upon ; and that even a second will not afford a sufficient basis on which to rest ; and that, to secure a position of stability there must at least be three points of support provided, else there is danger that it may topple to an overthrow. We think that we have seen something akin to this ere the mind of an inquirer was rightly grounded and settled on the basis of God's revealed testimony—how it veers and fluctuates when holding only by one article and regardless of all the others—how tossed about it is apt to be by every wind, when it fails of a sufficiently extended grasp on the truths of Christianity—how those who talk for example of the bare act of faith, vacillate and give way in the hour of temptation, and that just because they have not stuck to the testimony of the Bible about the whole duty and discipline of holiness—how those who admit both the righteousness of Christ as their plea, and the regeneration of their own characters as their preparation for heaven to be alike indispensable, have nevertheless been brought to shipwreck ; and that just because, though adhering in words to these two generalities, they have never spread them abroad over their whole history in the living applications of prayer and watchfulness. They need the filling up of their lives and hearts with the whole transcript of revelation. One doctrine does not suffice for this—for God in His wisdom has thought fit that there shall be a form or scheme of doctrine. The obedience of the heart unto the faith, is obedience unto all that God proposes for the belief and acceptance of those who have entered on the scholarship of eternity ; and for this purpose there must be, not a mere subscription or assent of the understanding to any given number of points and articles—there must be a broad coalescence of the mind with the whole expanse and magnitude of the book of God's testimony.

A scheme of doctrine, you will observe, implies more truths than one ; and St. Paul had actually gone beyond the announcement of his one individual item by the time that he reached the verse which is now submitted to you. He was very full on Christ as the propitiation for sin, and on the righteousness of Christ as the plea of acceptance and reward for sinners—and then, when he came to the question—Shall they who are partakers of this benefit continue in sin that they may get still more of the benefit ?—he is very strenuous in pronouncing a negative thereupon. Here there was not one doctrine but a form of doc-

trine, not one truth but a compound of truths—a mould graven on both sides of it with certain various characters; and the softened metal that is poured therein yields to it all round, and takes the varied impression from it. And so of him who obeys from the heart the form of doctrine into which he is delivered. He does not yield to one article, and present a side of hardness and of resistance to another article. He is thoroughly softened and humbled under a sense of sinfulness, and most willingly takes the salvation of the gospel on the terms of the gospel. He does not, like the sturdy controversialist or the eager champion of system and of argument, call out from the word his own favourite position, with the light of which he would overbear and eclipse the whole remaining expanse of the law and of the testimony; but like the little child, he follows on to know the Lord—just as the revealed things offer themselves to his docility and notice on that inscribed tablet which the Lord hath placed before him. This was the way in which the disciples of Paul seemed to have learned their lessons at his hand; and this way of it, it would appear, brings forth the testimony from their apostle, that they had obeyed from the heart the form of his doctrine. Their obeying of it from the heart marks their obeying of it truly and in the inward parts; and their obeying a form of doctrine marks, not their exclusive adherence to one doctrine, but their broad and entire coalescence in his summary of doctrine. A most important step this, for it forms the very nodus of concatenation between what the apostle says they once were and what he says they now are. They were the servants of sin: They are the servants of righteousness, and why?—what was it that took place at the interesting moment of transition, or rather what was it that gave rise to it? They obeyed from the heart the form of doctrine into which they were moulded or cast; and then was it that they were made free from sin—then was it that, loosed from its power as well as from its condemnation, they gave their emancipated faculties to the service of righteousness. I therefore know not a more pertinent and more efficacious advice that I can give for those who are desirous of being made free from sin, and so of being translated into the service of another master beside him who heretofore has domineered over them, than that they should spread open their whole mind to the whole testimony—than that they should render that obedience of their hearts unto the faith which consists not in the confinement either of their attention or belief to one of its articles, but

in the freeness of their walking survey over the whole platform of revelation, and in their ready appropriation of all the truths which lie extended thereupon. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and ye shall be saved," is a quotation from Scripture, and indeed one of the most precious and memorable of its sayings—but "repent and believe the gospel," is the complex announcement of Jesus Christ himself; and you must treasure up the saying that "unless ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." "There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus," is a weighty and well-laid doctrine—but another is subjoined; and out of the two we have this scheme or form of doctrine, that "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." The belief of the truth as it is in Jesus will be the salvation of one and all who embrace it; but mark how this one announcement has another added to it, which is hinged to it as it were, and may be made to close into a mould for impressing the heart of God's elect children—"God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." To have the blood of Christ sprinkled upon you, is indeed to be furnished with a sure defence against the angel of wrath, when he cometh forth in his avenging mission against the children of iniquity; but within the compass of a single clause does the apostle Peter tack obedience to the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. And then, to use his expressions, do you "obey the truth," and are indeed "obedient children not fashioning yourselves" according to the errors and the ignorance of former days, when you submit to both the articles of this clause, and proceed upon them both. Paul went about preaching everywhere faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; but this forms only one part of his summary, according to his own description of it—and so he tells us of his "testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." In one place he could say of himself and of his disciples, that, "being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;" and in another place he says to his disciples, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God." And he told them that such they once were, but they had made it seems the very transition spoken of in our text; and he could now say, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." And the way for you, my brethren, to make good

the same transition, is to have the same obedience of faith ; it is to spread out the tablet of your heart for the pressure thereupon of all the characters that are graven on the tablet of revelation—it is to incorporate in your creed the necessity of a holy life, in imitation and at the will of the Lord Jesus, along with a humble reliance on His merits as your alone meritorious plea for acceptance with the Father—it is to give up the narrow, intolerant, and restrictive system of theology, which, by vesting a right of monopoly in a few of its favourite positions, acts like the corresponding system of trade, in impeding the full circulation of its truths and of its treasure, through that world within itself which is made up of the powers and affections and faculties that reside in a human bosom. But do you, my brethren, obey the whole form of Christian doctrine, as well as each and sundry of its articles—be your faith as broad and as long as is the record of all those communications that are addressed to it—and be very sure that it is only when you yield yourselves up in submission to all its truths that you can be made free from sin by sharing in the fulfilment of all its promises.

You often read in Christian authors of the power of the truth, by which they mean its power, not merely to pacify the sinner's fears but to sanctify his character. It is a just and expressive phrase, and is adverted to in the passage before us, where it is said that the being made free from sin, and becoming servants unto righteousness, turns on the obedience of the heart to doctrine. But it is not one doctrine only, but the entire form of doctrine, to which the heart is obedient ; and so this power of the truth is the power of the whole truth. Mutilate the truth and you cripple it. Pare it down and you paralyse its energies. The Spirit is grieved with the duplicity and the disingenuousness of men when they offer to divide that testimony which if they would but treat it fairly, He would turn into the mighty engine of their conversion, and so pass them over with the strength of His own right hand from the service of sin to the service of righteousness. The obedience must be sincere or it is not obedience from the heart ; and it must not be partial or it is not obedience to the whole form of doctrine that is delivered. And at the sight of this flaw the Spirit takes His flight from the heart that is deformed by it, and leaves the owner thereof in the thralldom of nature's corruption and nature's carnality. And thus, my brethren, as you hope to be rescued from the tyranny of sin by the power of Christian truth, you must fan and foster

the whole of it. There must be the submission of a whole faith to a whole testimony. Divide and you darken. The whole of that light which one truth or one portion of the record reflects upon another is extinguished—when the inquirer, instead of looking fearlessly abroad over the rich and varied landscape of revelation, fastens his intent regards on one narrow portion of the territory, and shuts out the rest from the eye of his contemplation. The Spirit will not lend Himself to such a man—one who does not choose to see afar off, and is sure to forget some capital truth in that finished scheme of doctrine which the gospel has made known to us. And of all the things which he is apt to forget—perhaps the most frequent is, that every true Christian is purged from his old sins; and thus in the language of Peter, the person who is thus blind lacketh righteousness, and is both barren and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reason why you remain in the fetters of sin is that you refuse your consent to some part or other in the scheme of truth. You would fain have orthodoxy, and perhaps think that you are in the actual possession of it, when, without power and without spiritual discernment, you only strain at a few of the literalities of Christian doctrine, and sit down in the unmoved lethargy of nature, with the word upon your lips that there is salvation by faith, and forgiveness through the blood of a satisfying atonement. Could we only get you to admit the necessity of a personal surrender in all holy obedience unto God—could we prevail upon you to believe that Christ came not merely to redeem you from guilt but to redeem you from the vain conversation of the world—could we, under the power of this incipient conviction, only persuade you to make a beginning and to move a single footstep in the way of transition from sin unto righteousness—could you understand, that even as the remission of sins must be had so repentance must be accomplished ere you be admitted into heaven, and the honesty of this your understanding approve itself by your forthwith acting upon it—could we only get you thus to set forth on this measure of incipient light, the light would grow with the incipient obedience; and ever brightening as you advanced, would the principle of forsaking all for Christ become more decided, and your decision for Christ would grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of your dependence upon Him. The justification and the sanctification, these two mighty terms in Christianity, would be alike clearly apprehended as essential to the completion of the

scheme of that doctrine by the obedience of the heart unto which it is that you are saved. And I again repeat it, my brethren, take in the whole of gospel truth—lay hold of its offered pardon, and enter even now upon its prescribed course of purification. The Spirit will not look indifferently on your day of small things; but if you, casting yourself into the mould of the whole truth, shall labour to realize it and seek to be renewed as well as to be forgiven—He will come down with the might of His creative energies upon you, and breaking asunder the chains of your captivity to sin, will cause you henceforward to be the servants of righteousness.

This practical change stands connected with the obedience of your heart to the form or scheme of Christian doctrine—for it is upon this being rendered that you are made free from sin and become the servants of righteousness. Yet let us not think therefore, that we, of our own proper energy, supply as it were the first condition on which our deliverance from sin is made to turn, and that then the Spirit comes down and gives full and finished accomplishment to it. The truth is, that He presides over the initial as well as over all the successive movements of this great transformation; and accordingly, in the seventeenth verse, the primary circumstance of your obeying from the heart the form of doctrine is made matter of thanksgiving to God. It is through grace, in fact, that you are made to embrace the whole form of doctrine. If any of you feel so disposed in consequence of our imperfect explanations—the glory of this is due to grace, which has revealed to you the necessity of holiness as well as pardon—which has touched and softened your hearts under the impression of this truth—which has moved you to an aspiring obedience thereto—which will lead you, I trust, to carry out the principle into practice and daily conversation—which will vent itself upward to the sanctuary in prayer, and bring down that returning force which can unchain you from the bondage of corruption, and give you impulse and strength for all the services of righteousness. It is grace that begins the good work, and it is grace that perfects it—and to sin because we are under this grace, carries in it just the same contradiction, as to be in darkness because the sun has arisen, or to be in despair because an able friend has come forward to support us, or to be in disease because an infallible physician has taken us in his charge, and is now plying us with a regimen which never misgives, and with medicines the operation of which never disappointed him.

LECTURE XXXVI.

ROMANS VI. 19-21.

"I speak after the manner of men, because of the infirmity of your flesh : for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity ; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed ? for the end of those things is death."

THE first clause of the nineteenth verse reminds us somewhat of another passage in the apostle's writings, when he says to his disciples—"I speak unto you not as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." The transition from the rude and raw conceptions of nature to the heights of spiritual wisdom and discernment, is not an immediate but a successive one ; and so it follows, that the illustrations of Christian doctrine must be varied according to the progress of him whom you are labouring to convince and to satisfy ; and we have to speak more in the manner of men, more in the way that is suited to the comprehension of unenlightened and unrenewed humanity, to those who are still in the infancy of their education for heaven—whereas, in the language of Paul, to those who are perfect, to those who by reason of use have had their senses well exercised, we speak what he calls hidden wisdom, even the wisdom of God in a mystery. From the clause before us we infer that the same topic may be variously illustrated, and that according to the degree of maturity which our hearers have attained in Christian experience. And agreeably to this we find, that whereas in the first instance the apostle, in expounding the personal change from sin to holiness which takes place on every believer, borrows a similitude that may be understood by men at the very outset of their Christian discipleship—he passes on to another consideration, the force of which could only be felt and acquiesced in by those who had in some degree been familiarized to the fruits and the feelings and the delights of new obedience.

This by the way may account for the various tastes that there

are for various styles and manners of elucidation ; and all it may be of substantially the same doctrine. It justifies fully the very peculiar appetite that a hearer is often found to express for that which he feels to be most suited to him. Nay, it goes to explain the change that may have taken place in his preference for the ministrations of another expounder, whose mode of putting or illustrating the truths of Christianity is the best adapted to that state of progress whereunto he has now attained. And all that remains for him is to bear in mind that there are other hearts and other understandings in the world beside his own—that as there is a diversity of subjects so there is and so there ought to be a diversity of applications ; and accordingly a diversity of gifts is provided by that Spirit who divideth to every man severally as He will. This consideration should serve to abate a little of the intolerance wherewith a hearer is apt to regard the ministrations of all who do not lie within the boundary of his own very limited and exclusive favouritism. It should expand into a wider latitude that estimation of utility and worth, which he is too apt to confine to those select few among the preachers who work most effectually upon the peculiar tablet of his own understanding. More particularly, when he sees how Paul accommodated his illustrations to the capacities and progress of his disciples—how, on the principle of being all things to all men, he made use of carnal or human comparisons, to those who were but just emerging into spiritual light from the mere light and discernment of nature—how this gifted apostle, who could have dealt out the profounder mysteries to the older and more accomplished converts, condescended to men of low attainment, and for their sakes came forth with explanations the need or the pertinency of which might not have been felt by those who had reached a higher maturity of experience in the gospel ; then might he patiently receive what to him perhaps are the insipid or inapplicable reasonings of his minister, in the hope that others of the congregation require the very argument which falls powerless on his own heart, and are profiting by the very considerations which to him are superfluous or uncalled for.

And it is well to notice what the precise illustration is, which Paul seems while he was using it to have felt of so puerile and elementary a character, or so adapted to the mere infancy of the Christian understanding, that he says, I speak as a man or as a mere child of nature, who have not been initiated into the mys-

teries of the gospel, and that because of the infirmity of your flesh. The thing he was attempting to make plain to them, was the transition of a believer from the service of sin to the service of righteousness. The service of sin might not be a very palpable conception to us, it being the service of a mere abstraction, so long as you restrict your attention to the general term. But when embodied, as it was to the imagination of a heathen convert, in the person of a heathen deity, and familiar as he must have been with those impure and frantic orgies which were held in honour of a god who both exemplified and patronized the worst vices of our nature—he would instantly connect with the service of sin the service of a living master who issued a voice of authority, and exacted deeds of iniquity from his worshippers as the most acceptable homage that could be rendered to him. In turning from that service to the service of righteousness, he could thus easily comprehend it, as a similar transition to that of passing from under the authority of one living commander to another—even from the god or gods to whom he aforetime rendered the offering of acceptable impurity or acceptable cruelty, to the true God of heaven and of earth, whom he could only serve acceptably by walking in holiness and righteousness before Him. And these Romans, accustomed as they were to the transference of bond-slaves from one master to another, to the way in which they were ransomed from their old servitude and placed under a new subjection to him who had purchased or redeemed them, would the more easily catch the similitude from the mouth of the apostle—when he told them of the power and effect of the ransom by Christ; and how, in virtue of it, they were rescued from the grasp of their old tyrant, who could no longer wield that vengeance against them for sin which he else had been permitted to exercise—and no longer, if they chose to betake themselves to the grace and privileges of the gospel, could have that ascendancy over them by which their affections were entangled, and they were kept under the oppressive influence of moral evil. From this they were all released and extricated by the new master who had laid down His life for them as the price of their captivity; and whom, now that He had taken it up again, they were bound to serve in the way of all His commandments.

And this illustration of it was not only well adapted to the understanding of those pagans who had turned them from dumb idols to serve the living and the true God; it may still in

many instances be the most effectual that can be employed for making clear to the convert of modern days, either at the moment of his turning or recently after he has done so, how he enters on the new habit of a sanctified disciple, at the time when rescued from condemnation he cherishes the new hope of a redeemed disciple. Neither need he be at a loss for a living and substantial personification, when told of the service of sin. There is a real monarch to whom the iniquities of every sinner are so many acceptable offerings—a superhuman being who sits on a throne the authority of which extends over a wide domain of the moral world—an actual and living Moloch, who is surrounded by innumerable slaves whom he has the power of tyrannizing over in time and of tormenting through all eternity: And the express mission of the Son of God was to combat and overthrow him. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and to make good the deliverance of all who put themselves under Himself as the Captain of their salvation, and are willing to be rescued from the grasp of the adversary. And that power to punish us in hell, wherewith Satan was invested, Christ has as it were exhausted by stepping forward and absorbing its whole discharge in His own body on the tree. And that power to fascinate and enthrall us upon earth, wherewith the god of this world holds his votaries in subjection to sin, the Redeemer hath also overcome by the Spirit poured forth on the hearts of His followers, from that throne of mediatorship to which He has been exalted. And the believer, strong and shielded and secure in the privileges that have thus been obtained for him, is effectually set at large from the power of his old master—either to confine him in the prison-house of guilt, or to control him in any of his actions now that he walketh at liberty. But still, like the bond-servant who has been translated to a humane from a hard-hearted superior, he is not his own—he is bought with a price—and his business is now to devote to the new and the pleasing service of Him who loveth righteousness and who hateth iniquity, that soul and spirit and body which are not his own but his Lord's.

But the chief cause, perhaps, why an illustration of this sort is more readily seized upon at the outset of our Christianity than many others, is that it falls more in with the natural legality of the human heart. We know not how obstinately it is that the conception of work and wages adheres to us, long after we profess to have given in to the doctrine of justification by faith

alone, and this leaven of carnality may remain to taint the pure and the free and evangelical spirit, even for many months after the germ of gospel truth has been deposited, and ere by its growth it overbear the feelings and tendencies of the old man. It is remarkable that Paul should think it right to adjust his expositions to this state of immature and yet unformed Christianity; and that the sturdy and unbending advocate of salvation by grace, and by grace exclusively, should for the purpose of helping forward the cause of Christian holiness, avail himself of the legal admixture that still infuses itself into the thoughts at the earlier stages of the Christian discipleship. But so it is; and on the principle of being all things to all men he suits his argument to the infirmity of their flesh; and disposed as they are under the economy of nature to regard themselves as servants who by the fulfilment of an allotted task make out a title to payment from their master—he still, under the economy of the gospel, employs at least the relationship of servant and master to express the relationship that there is between them and God. He comes upon the very borders of legality, in order that he might fetch from thence a something that he might suitably address to the babes in Christ, for the purpose of urging them on to the new life that becomes the new creature; and while none more careful than he to check in his disciples the spirit that would challenge reward from God, even as the servant might prosecute the master for his rightful wages—yet none more solicitous than he, that every Christian should be steadfast and abundant in all the works of righteousness. And therefore did he gladly avail himself of a similitude that the very legalism of the heart would dispose it the more readily to apprehend, and by which he would make it plain to his disciples that they must now give themselves up to the service of another master—that they must now yield themselves unto God.

It may only be further necessary in this verse to explain its reiterations. In their former state they had made their members servants to iniquity unto iniquity—that is, iniquity—or he in whom moral evil may be conceived as personified or embodied—was their master. They were servants to, or the servants of iniquity; and it is added ‘unto iniquity’—that is to say, unto the corruption or iniquity of their own character. The effect of making iniquity their master was to stamp the character of iniquity upon their souls. They were the slaves of the tyrant iniquity; and the effect of this was to make themselves iniqui-

tous. And in like manner, are we to explain the counterpart clause of their yielding their members servants to righteousness unto holiness—that is, by entering into the service of this new master they become partakers of his character and of his taste in their own persons. They could not become the servants of righteousness, without themselves becoming holy. In yielding up their members unto righteousness they look to righteousness as vested with an authority to rule over their actions; and the effect of their doing so is, that righteousness becomes an accomplishment to adorn and exalt their nature. So that this last clause may be thus paraphrased—‘As aforetime you have yielded your members servants unto uncleanness and to iniquity, unto the utter ruin and corruption of your whole character—even so now yield your members servants to righteousness, unto the recovery and transformation of your character, that it may stand out anew in all the charms of holiness, and be graced as it was originally with the features and the lineaments of that divine resemblance wherein it was created.’

And I may here advert to the influence which action has upon principle. When you do what is right at the bidding of another, there may, in the first instance, be no very willing concurrence of the heart with the obedience that has been prescribed to you. You may yield yourself up unto God under an overpowering sense of His authority; and from that impulse alone do many things which the spontaneous tastes and feelings of the inner man do not very cordially go along with. But no matter—you have entered upon His service; and the effect of your strenuous and faithful perseverance in the course of it will be to reconcile the inner man to that whereunto you have restrained the outer man. This is a result which it appears you must work your way to. The effect of your going through the services of righteousness, is that you will at length attain the spirit of holiness. You must labour at the work of obedience; and like unto the effect of practice in many other parts of human experience, you will at length come to love the ways of obedience. We doubt not that a certain degree of desire and of cordial regard towards what is right enters into the very first moving principle that sets you moving on the career of your sanctification. But you are not to wait till your taste and affections be spiritualized to a sufficient pitch, ere you embark on this career. Now—whether with or against the grain—do whatever your hand findeth to do which you know to be obviously right. Do it under a sense of

allegiance to God, in defect meanwhile of the more generous and angelic principle—that you like the doing of it; and the transition pointed out in the text seems to be, that, as the fruit of your being subordinated to God's authority you will come at length to be assimilated to Him in holiness.

Ver. 20.—This twentieth verse seems an argument for our entire dedication to the new master on whose service we have entered. It is somewhat like the consideration of making the past time of our life suffice for having done the will of the flesh; and that it is now high time to spend the remainder of our life in doing the will of God. Aforetime you were wholly given over to the service of sin, and righteousness—as emanated from the divine sovereignty—had no dominion. You were free from righteousness, or wholly unrestrained by its obligations and its precepts. Now then be free from sin, resist the mandates of the old tyrant, and give yourself wholly up to the will of the new master—let your obedience to Him now be as complete as was your disregard of Him then; and an argument of mighty influence why the old service should be altogether followed, is urged upon them in the following verse, by the appeal which the apostle makes to their own memory, of what it was they gained in the employment of their first master.

Ver. 21.—The apostle now proceeds to an argument that could be better seized upon by those who had to a certain degree moved onwards in Christianity—who could now speak to the superiority of the new service over the old; and that not from the higher authority which had prescribed it, but from the more refined character and enjoyment of the service itself—by those whose moral taste had undergone a renovation, and could now look back with loathing upon the profligacies of their former career, while they cherished a love and a heartfelt preference for those beauties of holiness which adorned the new path whereon they had entered. You will see that to appreciate such a comparison marked a higher state of spiritual cultivation, than merely, at the bidding of God, to enter upon the task which at the outset of their gospel profession He as their new master had put into their hand. The musical scholar who at the bidding of a parent or a preceptor practises every day at the required hours upon an instrument, is not so ripe for a festival of harmony as he who, under the impulse of an ear all awake to its charms, revels as in his most kindred element when spontaneously he sets him down to the performance—not as a task but

as an entertainment. And neither is that spiritual scholar so ripe for heaven, who because of the infirmity of his flesh needs to have his distaste for holiness overcome by the argument of God's authority—as he who, in his love for holiness, now confirmed by the experience he has had of its pleasant and peaceful ways, nauseates with his whole heart the opposite vice and the opposite impurity. It is right to lift the voice of an imperative requirement on the side of new obedience, at the commencement of every man's Christianity—just as it is right to exact from the musical scholar a regular attendance on lessons which at the outset he may find to be wearisome. But as in the one case what is felt to be a weariness, often merges, with the cultivation of the taste and of the ear, into a willing and much loved gratification—so, in the other case, what, from the strength of remaining carnality, was laboured at as a bondage and called for the direct incitement of God's authoritative command to make head against the sluggishness of nature, yet, as the fruit of perseverance in the walk of holiness, becomes a holy exercise of the will; and there is a growth of affection for all its exercises and all its ways; and the doing of the allotted task by the outer man calls forth and confirms a suitable taste of accordancy in the inner man; and in proportion to the strength of the regard for what is sacred, must be the strength of the recoil from what is sinful and what is sensual. So that while Paul, in illustrating the transition of a gospel convert from sin unto righteousness, did, at the moment of that transition and because of the infirmity of his flesh, urge in terms as direct as if the legal economy were still in force, the obligation under which he lay to exchange the service of one master for the service of another—yet, with the disciple who long had practised and long had persevered at the bidden employment, could he use an argument of a higher and nobler and more generous character; and, triumphantly appealing to his own recollection, ask him to compare the vileness and wretchedness of his former days, with the preciousness of that heavenly charm which he now felt to be in all the works and all the ways of new obedience.

The apostle tells us here of the fruit of sin in time, and of its fruit in eternity. For its fruit in time he refers his disciples to their own experience; and whether we advert to the licentious or the malignant passions of our nature, we shall find that even on this side of the grave it is a fruit of exceeding bitterness. That heart which is either tossed with the agitations of

unhallowed desire, or preyed upon by the remorse and shame and guilty terror that are attendant on its gratification—that once serene bosom, from which its wonted peace, because its wonted sense of purity, has departed—that chamber of the thoughts which is no longer calm, because stormed out of all tranquillity and self-command by the power of a wild imagination—the unhappy owner of all this turbulence, who has given up the reins of government, and now maddens in the pursuit of his tumultuous joys along the career of lawless dissipation—let him speak for himself to the fruit of those things of which he may well be ashamed. Oh! does he not feel, though still at a distance from the materialism of hell, that a hell of restlessness and agony has already taken up its inmost dwelling-place in his soul; that there the whip of a secret tormentor has begun its inflictions; and that even now the undying worm is consciously active and never ceases to corrode him! Or, if he be a stranger still to the fiercer tortures of the heart, will he not at least admit, that, as the fruit of guilty indulgence, a hell of darkness if not a hell of agony has taken possession of it—that at least the whole of that beauteous morning light which gladdened his pure and peaceful childhood is utterly extinguished—that all the vernal springs of approved and placid satisfaction are now dried up—and that, in the whole rapture and riot of his noisy companionship, there is nought that can so cheer his desolate spirit as in the happy years of his boyhood—nought that shines so sweetly upon him as did the lustre of his pious and his early home!

Or if, from the wretchedness of him who is the victim of his base and sordid propensities, you proceed to examine the wretchedness of him whom deceit is ever instigating against another's rights, or cruelty has steeled against all that is exquisite and all that is prolonged in another's sufferings—you will find that here too the heart which is the place of wickedness is also the place of woe; and that whatever the amount of unhappiness may be of which he is the instrument to others, it may not equal the unhappiness which his own moral perversities have fermented in his own bosom. The man of deep and inscrutable design, who is an utter stranger to the simplicity and godly sincerity of the gospel—the man of thought and mystery and silence, and into the hiding-place of whose inaccessible heart the light of day never enters—the man who ever ruminates and ponders and revolves, and has a secret chamber of plot and artifice in his own

bosom which admits of no partnership with a single brother of the species—such a one, it may be thought, diabolical though he be, will, in the triumphs of his wary and well-laid policy, have his own sources of devilish satisfaction. But ere he reach his place in eternity, he too in time may have the foretaste of the misery that awaits him. There is already a hell in his own heart, that is replete with the worst sufferings of the hell of condemnation; and if through the deep disguises in which he lies entrenched from the eye of his fellow-men we could see all the fears and all the forebodings that fluctuate within him, we should say of him, what is true of every son of wickedness, that, like the troubled sea, he cannot rest.

It seems inseparable from the constitution of every sentient creature, and who is at the same time endowed with moral faculties, that he cannot become wrong without at the same time becoming wretched. And what is the death that is the end of these things, but their natural and their full-grown consummation? The fruit of sin in time, when arrived at full and finished maturity, is just the fruit of sin through eternity. There may be fire—there may be a material lake of vengeance—there may be the shootings of physical agony inflicted on the material frames of the damned by material instruments: But we believe that the chief elements of the torture there will be moral elements—that fierce and unhallowed desire—that contempt and jealousy and hatred unquenchable—that rancour in every heart and disdain in every countenance—that the glare of fiendish malignity, and the outcry of mutual revilings, and the oaths of daring blasphemy, and the keen agony of conscious and convicted worthlessness—we believe that these will form the ingredients of that living lake where the spirits of the accursed will be for ever inhaling an atmosphere of spiritual bitterness. And such is the natural course and consummation of iniquity upon earth. It is merely the sinner reaping what he has sown; and suffering the misery that is essentially entailed upon the character; and passing onwards, by a kind of necessary transition, from the growth and indulgence of vice here to the constitutional result of it in wretchedness both here and hereafter. It makes no violent or desultory step, from sin in time to hell in eternity. The one emerges from the other, as does the fruit from the flower. It is simply that the sinner be filled with his own ways, and that he eat the fruit of his own devices. All that is necessary to constitute a hell, is to congregate the disobedient together;

where, in the language of the psalmist, they are merely given up by God to their own hearts' lusts, and where they walk in their own counsels.

To conclude—there are some we trust here present, who feel the force of the comparison between their past and their present habits; and who, all open to the charms of the vast superiority which lies in holiness, would, from the impulse of spiritual taste alone, make a most quick and disgustful recoil from all iniquity. But there may be others who, instead of having accomplished the transition from darkness to light, are only at the turning-point—or are yet but meditating the transition, instead of having made it. They have not yet acquired that loathing for sin, and that love of sacredness, which would make them appreciate the contrast which the apostle draws between the service of the old and the service of the new master. Then let us revert to them with the argument of the apostle, who spoke to his young converts as a man, and because of the infirmity of their flesh. If they are not yet in a condition for being roused to the performance of the latter service by the finer argument of taste, let us attempt to rouse them by the grosser argument of authority. The scholar is compelled to his hours of attendance for a musical task, and thus does he work himself into a musical taste. And know, ye men who are still only at the place of breaking forth on the career of new obedience, that it is a career which must be entered on—that though it should for the present be against every taste and tendency of the inner man, your business is to constrain the outer man to a conformity with all the requirements of the gospel—that the life of a Christian is not utterly and throughout like a piece of well-tuned harmony, moving in soft and flowing accordance with a well-poised and smoothly-going mechanism,—but there is a conflict, and a strenuousness, and a painful opposition between the delights of nature and the demands of the gospel, and a positive striving to enter in at the strait gate, and a violence in seizing upon the kingdom of heaven, which is taken by force.

LECTURE XXXVII.

ROMANS VI. 22, 23.

"But now, being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

THE apostle, in contrasting the nature and enjoyment of the two services, passes from that of sin, which is indeed a service of bitterness, to that of righteousness, which is a service of delight here and of enduring bliss and glory hereafter. It is remarkable that he speaks of holiness as the fruit, and not as the principle of our service to God—as the effect which that service has upon the character, and not as the impelling moral power which led to the service. And this accords with the observations that we made on the various clauses of the nineteenth verse—where they who had yielded their members servants to iniquity, are represented as having thereby reaped fruit unto iniquity—or in other words, as having, by their own sinful work, aggravated and confirmed the sinfulness of their own characters. And on the other hand, they who had yielded their members servants to righteousness, are represented as having reaped thereby fruit unto holiness—or in other words, they, by doing that which was right, and that on a direct feeling of obligation or at the bidding of a direct authority, by giving an obedient hand to the work of righteousness, rectified their own moral frames; restored to themselves that image of holiness in which they were originally formed; became saints in taste and principle, from being at the first only saints of performance. The obedience of the hand reached a sanctifying influence upon their hearts; and a perseverance in holy conduct made them at length to be holy creatures. This is the very process laid down in the verse before us. In virtue of having become servants to God, they had their fruit unto holiness. We have no doubt that there is a germ of holiness at the very outset of the new life of the new creature in Christ Jesus. But still a coarser principle of it, if I may be allowed the expression, may predominate at the first; and the

finer principles of it may grow into establishment afterwards. The good things may be done, somewhat doggedly as it were, at the will of another; but the assiduous doing of the hand may at length carry along with it the delight of the heart, and the same good things be done at our own will. It may become at length a more spontaneous and pleasurable service; and this certainly marks a stage of higher and more saintly advancement in personal Christianity. It evinces a growing assimilation to God, who does what is right, not in force of another's authority, but in force of the free and original propensities of His own nature to all that is excellent. And in like manner does it forward our resemblance to Him—when, on our first becoming subject to His imperative control, we at length love the service which we aforetime laboured in—when that way, to which at His word of command we have betaken ourselves, becomes a way of pleasantness—when that path, to which we constrained our footsteps because He had prescribed it, is felt by us to be a path of peace. By such a blessed progress of sanctification as this do we at length cease to be servants and become sons; the Spirit of adoption is shed upon us; and we feel, even here, somewhat of the glorious liberty of God's own children. A thing of labour is transformed into a thing of love. Our duty becomes our inclination. And by the heart and spirit being enlisted thereinto, what was before of constraint is now of congeniality and most willing accord. The feeling of bondage wears away; and that which might once have been felt as a burden, is now felt as the very beatitude of the soul. It is thus that the process of the text is realized; and when the transition is so made that the work of servitude becomes a work of felicity and freedom—then is it that man becomes like unto God, and holy even as He is holy.

One most important use to be drawn from this argument is, that you are not to suspend the work of literal obedience till you are prepared by the renewal that has taken effect on the inner man for rendering unto God a thoroughly spiritual obedience. There are some who are positively afraid of putting forth their hand on the work of the commandments at all, till they are qualified for the service of God on sound and evangelical principles. Now, in every case, it is right to be always doing what is agreeable to the will of God. There may be a mixture at first of the spirit of bondage—there may be a remainder and taint of the leaven of legalism—there may be so much of

nature's corrupt ingredient in it at the outset, that the apostle would say of these babes in Christ who have just set forth on their new career—"I speak unto you not as unto spiritual but as unto carnal." Yet still it is good to give yourselves over, amid all the crude and embryo and infant conceptions of a young disciple, to the direct service of God. Break loose from your iniquities at this moment. Turn you to all that is palpably on the side of God's law. Struggle your way to the performance of what is virtuous, through all those elements of obscurity and disorder which may fluctuate long in the bosom of a convert. Do plainly what God bids, and on the direct impulse too of God's authority; and the fruit of your thus entering upon His service will be the perfecting at length of your own holiness—such a holiness as shall be without spot and wrinkle—purified from the flaw of legal bondage or of mercenary selfishness—a holiness that finds its enjoyment in the service itself, and not in any remuneration that is distinct from or subsequent to the service—a holiness that is upheld, not by the future hope of the great reward which is to come after the keeping of the commandments, but by the present experience, that in the keeping of the commandments there is a great reward.

Yet mark it well, my brethren, that not till you are made free from sin can you enter even upon the first rudiments of a fruitful and acceptable obedience—not till you are delivered from him, who like the executioner for a debt could at any time seize upon all your gains, and thus render all care and effort and industry on your part of no avail. The analogy holds between him who has the power of pursuing you with diligence because of what you owe, and him who has the power of inflicting death as the condemnatory sentence upon you, because of what you have incurred as a transgressor of the law. The man who has not gotten his discharge is bereft of every motive to economy or to labour—because the creditor is on the watch to lay hold of the entire proceeds; and by every movement he makes towards him he can add to the expense of the business, and so plunge him into more hopeless and irretrievable circumstances than before. And so it is of the great adversary of human souls—invested with power as the grim executioner of the sentence; and invested also with the power of aggravating that sentence by the corrupt sway that he has over the affections of his enslaved votaries, by the command which belongs to him as the god of this world over all the elements of temptation, by his

ill-gotten empire in the hearts of the fallen posterity of a fallen ancestor. To be freed from this hateful tyranny there must be recourse to Christ as your surety—so that this archbailiff shall no longer have the right to pursue you for the heavy arrears of all the negligence and all the misconduct that are past; and there must also be recourse upon Christ as your strength and sanctifier—so that this arch-betrayer shall be as little able to subjugate you to the power of sin as to exact from you its punishment. So that faith, and justification by faith, and our interest in that promise of the Spirit which is given to faith—this after all forms the great introductory step to a life of hearty because hopeful obedience. A more literal obedience at the first, may be the stepping-stone to a more spiritual obedience afterwards—but faith is the essential stepping-stone to all obedience. Without faith, the sense of a debt from which you are not yet free will ever continue to haunt and to paralyse you. Without faith, God remains the object, not of love, but of dread; and thus an immovable interdict is laid upon the service of the affections. Without faith, all the helps and facilities of obedience are withheld from the soul; and the weary unproductive struggle of him who is not yet freed from the law which is the strength of sin, terminates either in a deceitful formality, or in the abandonment of a task now felt to be impracticable, or finally in the utter wretchedness of despair. Faith opens a gate of conveyance through all these obstructions. It cancels the bond that was before felt as a dead weight on all the energies of an aspiring reformation. It gives the feeling that now obedience is not in vain; and that the labour of serving God, instead of having all its acquisitions wrested away as by the hand of an unrelenting creditor on the moment that they are made, is now productive of a fruit that is realized in time and that endures through eternity. Like the discharged bankrupt, can the believer who is freed from sin, now count upon the gains of his diligence, and may therefore set himself anew to save and to strive for treasure that he is permitted to enjoy. Faith is the starting-post of obedience; but what I want is that you start immediately—that you wait not for more light to spiritualize your obedience; but that you work for more light, by yielding a present obedience up to the present light which you possess—that you stir up all the gift which is now in you; and this is the way to have the gift enlarged—that whatever your hand findeth to do in the way of service to God you now do it with

all your might : And the very fruit of doing it because of His authority, is that you will at length do it because of your own renovated taste. As you persevere in the labours of His service, you will grow in the likeness of His character. The graces of holiness will both brighten and multiply upon you. These will be your treasures, and treasures for heaven too—the delights of which mainly consist in the affections and feelings and congenial employments of the new creature.

We gather from the text what is the great and practical business of a Christian in the world. It is to perfect his holiness. The promises he lays hold of by faith. The future blessedness and the present sanctification are both held out to him as a gift, at the very moment of his first contact with the overtures of the gospel. There is a free pardon—there is an all-perfect righteousness for his valid claim upon God's favour—there is a renewing and a strengthening spirit—all these are gratuitously stretched forth to him for his acceptance ; and his business, and the business of you all, is now, even now, to put on the investiture of these various privileges. And mark how the apostle lays down the career of activity for a disciple, as a thing subsequent to all this, and emanating out of all this—*“ Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting our holiness in the fear of God.”* And it is of importance here to advert to the place that the fear of God has in this process of your advancing sanctification—as harmonizing with the text, that by becoming the servants of God ye have your fruit unto holiness. You begin the new obedience of the gospel, more at first in the spirit and with the fearfulness of servants—more under the impulse of God's rightful authority over you—more perhaps at His bidding than at your inclination—more from a sense of duty to Him, than from the love you as yet bear to the work that He has given you to do. But no matter—be diligent with such principles as you have, with such performances as God hath prescribed to you ; and your diligence in the service will at length work out a delight in the service. The labour you render to Him as your Master will forward and mature your family likeness to Him as your Father. From servants you will become sons ; and my object in urging this law and order of progression upon you, is, if possible, to set you working with such humble degrees of light and spirituality as you have—and this is the way of attaining to more light and

to more spirituality. It is to cause you to break forth from the ground of inactive speculation ; and to put into your hands the employment of an instant task, to which you may perhaps feel prompted at the outset by something even of a legal fear towards God. But no matter—should it be the task that goes to perfect your holiness, it will perfect also your love ; and then will you be conclusively delivered from the spirit of all legalism or bondage or carnality, and have that affection in your bosom which casteth out fear.

And I should like you to know the precise import of the term holiness. It has been defined to be all moral and spiritual excellence. But this does not just exhaust the meaning of the term. It is not merely virtue, even in the most comprehensive sense of the word, as including in it all that one absolutely ought to be, both in reference to God and to all the creatures of God. To turn virtue into holiness a reference must be had to the opposite of virtue—even sin ; and then does virtue become holiness, when, in addition to its own positive qualities, we behold with what sudden and sensitive aversion it recoils from the contamination of its opposite. Thus it is, my brethren, that had there been no sin there would have been no sacredness. There might have been love and rectitude and truth, exalted to all that infinity which they have in the Godhead ; and filling too, according to the measure of his capacity, every one being that had sprung from the creative hand of the Divinity. But in order that the Divinity or any subordinate creature shall make an exhibition of sacredness, it must be seen how it is that he stands affected by the contemplation of sin, or by the approach of sin to his presence. And then it is that we witness the characteristic display of God in the holiness or the sacredness that belongs to Him—when we read of the eyes which are so pure that they cannot look upon iniquity—when we read of a sanctuary so remote from all fellowship with evil, that it is there impossible for evil to dwell—when we read of God in the awful jealousies, and of God in the unconquerable repugnance of His nature to sin ; of the grief and the hostility and the indignation wherewith it is regarded by the Spirit of the Deity—so that should it offer to draw nigh, all heaven would shrink at its coming ; or fire would go forth from the place where His honour dwelleth, to burn up and to destroy.

Holiness is virtue, regarded in the one aspect of its separation from all that is opposite to virtue. It is thus that the attri-

butes of clean and pure and untainted are given to it—free from all spot, because free from all mixture or vicinity with sinfulness. The vessels of the temple were holy, because, set apart from common use, they were consecrated, and that exclusively, to the solemn and separate services of a divine ritual. But the most striking of all the historical demonstrations that we have of the deep and determined recoil that there is between a holy God and a sinful world, is, when He gave it in charge to set bounds about Mount Sinai and to sanctify it—through which neither the priests nor the people were to pass, lest the Lord should break forth upon them.

From this explanation you will see how the fruit of holiness arises out of the cleansing of yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit. The deeds of impurity must be given up at God's bidding, even though the urgency of His command should carry you beyond what you would have been carried to by your own detestation of impurity. You, at the outset of your new course make a wider departure from iniquity than your own dislike to iniquity would prompt you to. But then, this reformation of the outer man will tell upon the inner man. As you keep your fearful distance from evil, your dread and your delicacy against it will augment upon you; and it is just by this reflex influence of the habit upon the heart that its holiness is perfected. And this view of holiness, as consisting of virtue or moral excellence in its quality of uncompromising and unappeasable enmity to sin, harmonizes with the character that is held out of heaven—as being a place so inviolably sacred that nothing unclean or unrighteous can enter therein. O how it ought to chase away from our spirit all the delusions of Antinomianism—when told, as we are, what is the atmosphere of that place whither the disciples of Jesus are going; and how it is not possible for sin so much as to breathe in it! What a spur to diligence in the great work of purifying ourselves even as that upper paradise is pure in which we hope to spend an eternity; and how busy ought we to be at all the branches of our spiritual education, when we think that we shall be found unmeet for admittance into the great spiritual family unless we are found without spot and blameless in the day of Jesus Christ! It is thus that in our text, holiness here is the essential stepping-stone, or the indispensable path of conveyance to heaven hereafter. And as surely as the end of sin is death, so surely the end of holiness is life everlasting.

We have already adverted to the spiritual character of hell; and have affirmed that the wretchedness thereof was mainly composed of spiritual elements. And in like manner may we advert to the spiritual character of heaven; and as surely affirm of it, that the happiness which is felt and circulated there, is mainly composed of spiritual elements. It lies in the play and exercise of pleasurable affections—in the possession of a heart now thoroughly emancipated from all its idolatries, and attuned to the love of that which is most worthy of love—in the well-poised and well-constituted mechanism of the soul, that now moves in duteous and delightful conformity to the will of that mighty Being on whom all is suspended—in the conscious enjoyment of His favour, sensibly expressed by such indications of benignity and regard as will pour into the bosom unutterable ecstasy—in the raptured contemplation of all the glory and all the gracefulness that are spread out before the mental eye on the character of the Divinity—in the willing accordancy of honour and blessing and praise, not merely to Him who sitteth supreme on a throne of majesty, but to Him who paved for sinners a way of access into heaven, and consecrated it by His blood. And songs of eternal gratitude and gladness will ever and anon be lifted there; and it will be the spiritual jubilee of beatified spirits that is held there; and the clear ethereal element of holiness will be all that is breathed there; and, altogether, it will not be a sensual but a moral paradise—where righteousness will be the alone recreation, and the service of God be the very cordial and nutriment of the soul. And how is it possible, we again ask, that there can be any other way to such a habitation there, than the way here of aspiring and progressive holiness? What other education can fit us for such an eternity as this, but the education of virtuous discipline, and guarded purity, and determined watchfulness against that sin wherewith the sacredness of the upper regions can have no fellowship? If heaven above would recoil from all contact with the pollutions of the world that is below, then surely, we who are aspiring toward that heaven should keep our assiduous distance from them. The way of the disciple here should be as distinct and as distinguishable from that of a child of this world, as the places are in which they will spend their eternity; and if it be through the way of sin that the one reaches his abode of death and condemnation, so surely must the other keep on the way of holiness, ere he can reach the abode of life everlasting.

Ver. 23.—It is of importance here to remark the contrast which the apostle expresses in this verse, as to the manner of these two successions—how it is, on the one hand, that death follows in the train of sin; and how it is that everlasting life follows in the train of holiness. He had before likened the transition from the one state to the other, to a transition from the service of one master to the service of another master. And he before told us that he had done so on a principle of accommodation to the yet remaining carnality of their feelings and conceptions upon the whole subject. They were still infected with the spirit of legalism. They were still most familiar with the illustration of work and wages; and accustomed as they were to the transition of a bond-slave from one master to another, they could readily seize on that comparison—by which Paul urged upon them their emancipation from the authority of sin regarded as their old tyrant, and their allegiance to righteousness regarded as their new and lawful superior. But he now adverts to a difference between the two services, which it is of importance for us all to apprehend. The death that comes after sin comes as the wages of sin. Everlasting life, coming though it must after holiness, comes not as the wages of holiness. It is a gift. On this footing must it be received at the last; and on this footing must it now be looked forward to by the expectants of immortality.

As to the first of these successions, namely sin, and death as the wages of sin—the very term wages is expressive of the one, as being the fit remuneration of the other. We are thereby informed of death being rightfully the punishment of sin, or being due to it in the way of desert. I have already endeavoured to show that there is nothing in the tyranny of sin over the affections that can at all exempt us, its helpless slaves, from the condemnation to which sinners are liable—that the very strength of our inclinations to that which is evil just makes us the more atrocious, and therefore the more punishable—that had the necessity in question been a necessity against the will to do wickedly, there might have been cause shown why sentence of death should not be passed against us; but when that necessity just lies in the very bent and determination of the will towards wickedness, then is it a circumstance of aggravation, instead of an apology for our transgressions against the law of God. Let no man say, because of the depravity of his own heart, and the unresisted ascendancy of sin over it, that he is tempted of God.

The fact is that he is drawn away of his own lusts and enticed ; and the death which is laid upon him as a penalty, is as much the natural as it is the penal effect of his own conduct. In being enveloped with the atmosphere of hell on the other side of the grave because of his character on this side of it, he is simply filled with the fruit of his own ways—he is just reaping that which he has sown. And as necessarily as anger disquiets, and envy corrodes, and avarice chills, and inordinate desire shakes the spirit into frenzy—as necessarily as the fierce or malignant passions of our nature, like so many tormentor's whips, serve to scourge or to agonize—so necessarily, as well as meritoriously, does their entrance into hell hereafter follow in the train of all the iniquity that is unrepented of and unturned from.

And as hell is the place suited naturally for sin, so is heaven the place that is naturally suited for holiness. But while hell is both naturally and meritoriously the place for sin, heaven is naturally only and not meritoriously the place for holiness. Heaven is not so earned by man. It is given to him. And you should advert to the distinction so palpably here held out by the apostle, that whereas death is rendered to the sinner on the footing of wages that are due to him, eternal life is rendered to the believer on the footing of a gift that is simply and freely bestowed upon him.

But mark in the first place—that the circumstance of heaven being a gift does not supersede the necessity that there is for holiness going before it. It may take away from the merit of holiness ; but it does not take away from the need of holiness. The man who comes to the marriage feast must have on the marriage garment ; though it is not the simple act of putting on that garment which entitles him to a seat among the guests. His title there is simply the invitation that he has gotten ; and yet it is quite indispensable that he comes suitably arrayed. He may not be able even to purchase the requisite vestments ; and should these too have to be provided for him—should even the very dress in which he comes have to be given to him, as well as the entertainment that is set before him after he does come—it may both be true, that without the dress he could not have been admitted ; and also, that, poor and defenceless outcast as he was, he owes nothing whatever to himself—that all had to be given ; and that he, ere he could partake of that feast by which heaven is represented in the New Testament, had to be clothed by another's wealth as well as regaled by another's bounty.

Now this is just the way in which everlasting life, that none can obtain without being holy, is nevertheless a gift. It is of grace and not at all of works. It is all of grace from the first to the last—for the very holiness is given; and while of all sin it may be said that it is our own, because drawn away to it of our own lusts and enticed—of holiness it may be said that it is not of ourselves, but that good and perfect gift which cometh down from above.

And as eternal life being a gift does not supersede the need of holiness, so holiness being a gift does not supersede the need that there is for your own stirring, and your own painstaking, and all the diligence both of your performances and your prayers. Still the progress is just as has already been set forth to you, from such small doings as you are able for at the first, to your growth in grace and in holiness afterward. And yet, even for the small doings, an influence from on high must have been made to rest upon you. It is by power from heaven that the work is begun; and it is by power from the same quarter that the work is carried forward, even unto perfection. In other words, you cannot pray too early. Turn me and I shall be turned, may be a most pertinent and a most availing cry even at the outset of your conversion. You cannot too soon mix up dependence upon more grace, with diligence in the use of all the grace that has already been imparted. When you do whatever your hand findeth to do, you are only stirring up the gift that is in you; and if faithful in turning to account all that you do have, and watchful and prayerful for more, it is thus, that from the more rude and literal services which you are enabled to render at the outset of your new obedience you are conducted to the higher attainments of the spiritual character, and have your fruit unto an ever-advancing holiness. And Christ is all in all throughout this entire process. He purchased the inheritance, and He makes you meet for it. He has gone to prepare a place for you there, and He prepares you here for the place. It is through Him that the Spirit is given in answer to your prayers; and while nothing is more true than that you must have the fruit of holiness ere you can have eternal life, it is just as true that eternal life, both in its preparations and in its rewards, is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

LECTURE XXXVIII.

ROMANS VII. 1-4.

“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth: but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.”

THE apostle, in these verses, bethinks him of another illustration, on the subject of the new and the holy life that is incumbent on a believer—and one more addressed to his Jewish, even as the former was more to his Gentile disciples. In the verses that we have already tried to expound in your hearing, he illustrates the transference that takes place at conversion, from the service of sin to the service of righteousness—by the transference of a bond-slave now made free from his old master but whose services are still due to the present and the lawful superior under whom he now stands enrolled. The apostle then, at the commencement of this chapter, turns him to those who know the law, and deduces from the obligations which attach to marriage, the same result which he had done before from the obligations which attach to servitude—that is, an abandonment on the part of the believer of those doings which have their fruit unto death, and a new service which has its fruit unto holiness; or, as it is termed in this passage, its ‘fruit unto God.’

The attentive reader will perceive that there is a certain cast of obscurity over the whole of this passage, and arising from the apparent want of an entire and sustained analogy between the illustration and the thing to be illustrated. It is true that the obligations of marriage are annulled by the death of either of the parties; but then he only supposes the death of one of the parties, and that is the husband. Now the case to be elucidated

by this supposition, is that of the now dissolved relationship which there is between the law and him who was the subject of the law. The law is evidently the husband in this relationship, and the subject is as evidently the wife; so that, to make good the resemblance, the law should be conceived dead, and the subject alive, and at liberty for being transferred into another relationship than that which he formerly occupied. Yet in reading the first verse one would suppose, that it was on the expiry of life by the subject, and not on the expiry of life by the law, that the connexion between them was to be broken up and dissolved. It is true that the translation might have run thus, 'How that the law hath dominion over a man so long as *it* liveth;' and many, for the sake of preserving a more lucid and consistent analogy, have adopted this translation: but then this does not suit quite so well with the fourth verse—where, instead of the law having become dead unto us, we are represented as having become dead unto the law; so that a certain degree of that sort of confusion which arises from a mixed or traverse analogy appears unavoidable. It so happens too, that either supposition—of the law being dead or of the subject being dead, stands linked with very important and unquestionable truth—so that by admitting both you may exhibit this passage as the envelope of two meanings or two lessons, both of which are incontrovertibly sound and practically of very great consequence. This would of course add very much to the draught that we make upon your attention; and we fear indeed that unless there is a very pointed and strenuous forthputting of your own intelligence on these verses, we shall fail to render any explanation of them which you will feel to be at all very vivid or very interesting.

It is in the first place true that the law may be regarded as dead; and that he, our former husband, now taken out of the way, has left us free to enter upon that alliance with Christ, considered as our new husband, which in many other parts of the New Testament is likened unto a marriage. And it is true also, that the death of the law, which gave rise to the dissolution of its authority over us, took place at the death of Christ. It was then that, in the language addressed to the Colossians, our Saviour blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. It was then that the law lost its power to reckon with us, and its right as an offended lord to take

vengeance of our trespasses against Him. You have read of certain venomous animals which expire on the moment that they have deposited their sting and its mortal poison in the body of their victim. And thus there ensues a double death—the death of the sufferer and the death also of the assailant. And certain it is, that on the cross of our Saviour there was just such a catastrophe. Then did our Saviour pour out His soul, under the weight and agony of those inflictions that were laid upon Him by the law; but then also did the law expend all its power, as a judge and an avenger, over those who believe in the Saviour.

There is something in the consideration of the law alive and of the law dead, that should bear practically home upon the fears and the feelings of every inquirer. Without Christ the law is in living force against us; and were we rightly aware both of its claims and of our provocations—then should we feel as if in the hands of an enraged husband, who had us most thoroughly in his power; and who, incensed with jealousy and burning with the spirit of revenge, because of the way in which we had aggrieved and degraded him, held us in the daily terror of a resentment which no penitence could appease, and which he was ready to discharge upon us by some awful and overwhelming visitation. It is some such appalling imagination as this that gives rise to what is familiarly known by a phrase which often occurs in our older authors—a law-work. It is a work which passes through the heart of him who is conscience-stricken under the conviction of sin, and terror-stricken under the anticipation of a coming vengeance. The experience and degree of this state of emotion are exceedingly various; but at all times it is the state of one who feels himself still under the law, and liable to be reckoned with by him as an unrelenting creditor—who can allege such an amount of debt as never can be paid, and of deficiency that in his own person can never be atoned for. Some are pursued by this thought, as if by an arrow sticking fast. Others, without such intense agony, are at least haunted by a restlessness, and a discomfort, and a general uneasy sensation that all is not right, which leads them to cast about for the peace and deliverance of some place of refuge, in which they fain would take shelter and hide themselves. All are in the state of the apostle who says of himself, that when the law came sin revived and he died—or that, when a sense of the law and of its mighty demands visited his heart, there revived within

him a sense of his own fearful deficiencies along with it ; and he gave himself over to the despair of one who was doomed rightfully to suffer and rightfully to die. Men under earnestness, and who, at the same time, have not yet found their way to Christ, are in dealings with the law alive—stand related to him as the wife does to an outraged husband, breathing purposes of vindictiveness and resolute on the accomplishment of them—A state of appalling danger and darkness from which there is no relief but in the death of that husband ; and a state exemplifying perhaps the spiritual condition of some who now hear me, who know themselves to be sinners, and know the law wherewith they have to do as the unbending and implacable enemy of all who have offended him—who feel that with him there is no reprieve and no reconciliation—who have long perhaps wearied themselves in vain to find some door of escape from this severe and stern and uncompromising exactor—and, as the bitter result of all their fatiguing but unfruitful endeavours, are now sitting down in heartless and hopeless despondency.

And perhaps the illustration of our text may open up for them a way of access to the relief which they aspire after. It is just such a relief as would be afforded by the death of the first tyrannical husband, who, however, had a right to wreak the full weight of his displeasure upon you ; and by the substitution of another in his place, who had cast the veil of a deep and never-to-be-disturbed oblivion over the whole of your past history, and with whom you were admitted to the fellowship of love and peace and confidence. It is thus, my brethren, that Christ would divorce you as it were from your old alliance with the law, and welcome you, instead, to a new and friendly alliance with Himself. He invites you to treat in trust and in kindly fellowship with Him, as the alone party with whom you need to have to do ; and as to the law, with whom you so long have carried on the distressful fellowship of accusation on the one side and of conscious guilt and fear upon the other, He bids you cease from that fellowship altogether—by having no other regard unto the law that as unto a husband who is now dead and may be forgotten. And to deliver this contemplation from any image so revolting as that of our rejoicing in the death of a former husband, and finding all the relief of heaven in the more kindred and affectionate society of another, you have to remember, that the law has become dead, so as to be divested of all power of reckoning with you—not by an act which has

vilified the law or done it violence, but by an act which has magnified the law and made it honourable—not by a measure which has robbed the law of its due vindication, but by a measure which sets it forth to the world's eye in the full pomp and emblazonment of its vindicated honours—not by the new husband having with assassin blow relieved you of the old, but by the one having done full homage to the rights and authority of the other; and rendered to him such a proud and precious satisfaction, as exalts him more than he could have been exalted by all the fidelities of your most unbroken allegiance. It is thus that Christ has negotiated the matter with the law, and now invites you to lay upon Him the whole burden of its unsettled accounts, and of its fearful reckonings, and of its unappeased resentments—now invites you to break loose from the disquietudes of your old relationship, to emancipate yourselves from that heavy yoke under which you have become weary and heavy-laden, to come unto Him and take His yoke upon you, that you may have rest to your souls.

It is thus that the law, which is alive, and fiercely alive to all who are under it, becomes dead to the believer—now no longer under the law but under grace. To him the law is taken out of the way. It is the handwriting of ordinances that was at one time against him, and contrary to him; but its hostility has become powerless, ever since it has been nailed to the cross of Christ. It was then that it put forth all the right and power of condemnation which belonged to it; and therefore it was then that its authority as a judge may be said to have expired. The law had power over every man so long as it was alive; and its power went to the infliction of a grievous curse upon all, for all had broken it. But after it got its death-blow on the cross, this power ceased; and we became free from it—just as the woman is free from all the terror and all the tyranny of that deceased husband who wont to lord it, and perhaps with justice too, most painfully over her. And thus ought we to hold ourselves as free from the whole might and menacing of that law, which has now spent its whole force as an executioner on that body by which the whole chastisement of our peace has been borne. And we actually live beneath our offered privileges—we shut our hearts against that blessed tranquillity to which by the whole style and tenor of the gospel we are made most abundantly welcome, if we cast not away from our spirits the terror of an enemy who is now exhausted of all his strength,

and resign not ourselves to the full charm of so great and precious a deliverance.

When a sense of the law brings remorse or fearfulness into your heart—transfer your thoughts from it as your now dead, to Christ as your now living husband. Make your escape from all the rueful apprehension which the one would excite, to the rest and the comfort and the able protection which are held out by the other. Instead of having to do as formerly with the law, have to do with Christ now standing in its place. Thus will you flee to Him in whom you will find strong consolation. Nor will you throw yourselves loose from the guidance of all rule and of all rectitude, by having thus swept the law entirely away from the field of your vision, and made an entire substitution of Christ in its place—for He is revealed not merely as a witness unto the people, but as a leader and a commander unto the people.

But there is another way than through the death of the husband, by which the relationship of marriage may be dissolved; and that is by the death of the wife. And there is another way in which the relationship between the law and the subject may be dissolved, than by the death of the law; and that is by the death of the subject. The law has no more power over its dead subject, than the husband has over his dead wife, or than the tyrant has over his dead slave. And it is in this way that the assertion of all power or authority over us, on the part of the law, seems to be represented in the fourth verse—when we are said to have become dead unto the law, and, it is added, by the body of Christ. This brings us back to the conception that has been already so abundantly insisted on, that in Christ we all died—that we were dead in law; and though Christ alone and in His own body died for our sins, yet that was tantamount to the legal infliction of the sentence of death upon ourselves—so that the law can have no further reckoning with us, having already had that reckoning with us to the full in the person of Him who was our surety and our representative: And just as the criminal law has done its utmost upon him whom it has brought to execution, and can do no more—so the law can do no more in the way of vengeance with us, having already done all with Him who was smitten for our iniquities, and who poured out His soul unto the death for us.

After our old relationship with the law is thus put an end to, the vacancy is supplied, and in a way that is very interesting, by

Him who, after having through His death removed the law out of the station it had before occupied, then rose again and now stands in its place. And we utterly mistake the matter, if we think, that because emancipated from the relation in which we formerly stood to the law, we are therefore emancipated from all service. The wife owes a duty to her second husband as well as to her first. The one has his claims upon her obedience and her dutiful regards as well as the other. It is true that with the former the predominant feeling which prompted her services may have been that of obligation—mixed with great fearfulness, because of the deficiencies into which she was perpetually falling; and that with the latter the predominant feeling which prompts her services may be sweet and spontaneous affection to one from whom she is ever sure to obtain the kindest indulgence. But still it is evident, that under the second economy of matters there will be service, possibly much greater in amount and certainly far worthier in principle than all that was ever rendered under the first. And thus it is with the law on the one hand, and with Christ on the other. Under the law we were bidden to do and live; and the fear of a forfeiture, or the consciousness of having incurred a forfeiture, already infused the spirit of bondage into all our services. Under Christ we are bidden to live and do. We are put into the secure possession of that which we before had to strive for; and the happy rejoicing creature comes forth at will, with the services of gratitude and of new obedience. Instead of life being given as a return for the work that we render, our work is given as a return for the life that we receive. And it will further be seen, that, whereas a slavish and creeping and jealous selfishness was the principle of all our diligence under the law, it is a free and affectionate generosity which forms the principle of all our diligence under the gospel. In working to the law it is all for ourselves—even that we may earn a wage or a reward. In working to Christ it is all the freewill-offering of love and thankfulness—not in the mercenary spirit of a hireling, but with the buoyant alacrity of an eternally-obliged and devoted friend—because we thus judge, that as Christ died for all, then were all dead; and He died, that they who live should live no longer to themselves, but unto Him who died for them and who rose again.*

And to the eye of the attentive reader this may throw light on the difficult verse which comes immediately after the quota-

* 2 Cor. v. 15.

tion that we have now given. Christ upon earth so lived and so died in our stead, that we may be said to have been held in the body of Christ. He was made subject to the law in taking upon Him of our nature; and when He was in the world, we may be conceived with Him to have served the law, and with Him to have suffered under it. But the law hath dominion over a man only so long as he liveth; and thus, at the death of Christ, and our death along with Him, this dominion terminated. And now it is not with the law that we have to do, as Christ had to do with it in the days of His mortal flesh: it is with Christ in His immortal and glorified body that we hold all our conversation; and thus, perhaps, will the more profoundly spiritual of our hearers feel a meaning in these words of the apostle, who, after he had said of Christians that 'they should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again'—said further, 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things have become new.'

We shall not have time for the exposition of any more verses at present; and shall therefore occupy the remainder of this lecture in the enforcement of such practical lessons as may be suggested by the passage that we already have endeavoured to illustrate.

It must be quite clear to you, in the first place, that though released from the old relationship between you and the law on your becoming a disciple of Christ, you are not thereby thrown adrift from all restraint and from all regulation. The second husband has his claims as well as the first; and the wife is as much the subject of obligations to the one as to the other. The transition from nature to grace is here represented by the dissolving of one marriage and the contracting of another. Had there been no second marriage after the breaking up of the first, then might it have been inferred that the faith of the gospel led to a state of lawless and reckless abandonment. But there is such a marriage, which of course carries its duties and its obligations and its services along with it; and accordingly, there is a very remarkable clause in the apostle's writings that is commonly included in a parenthesis—when speaking of himself as without law he says—"Being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21).

Now this leads us in the second place to consider what it is of the law that we have parted with by the death of the first husband, and what it is of the law that is retained by our new alliance with the second. And perhaps this cannot be done better than in the language of our older divines, who tell us, that the law is abolished as a covenant. We have ceased from the economy of 'Do this and live.' Our obedience to the law is no longer the purchase-money by which heaven is bought—no longer the righteousness by which the rewards of eternity are earned—no longer the title-deed in virtue of which we can knock at the gate of Paradise, and presenting it there, can demand our admittance among its felicities and its glories. If you choose to abide in the relationship of the first marriage, the law will be unto you a rigorous exactor—insisting on every article of the bond, and looking with an air of jealous and pointed stipulation to your every fulfilment; and what is more, he will be unto you an offended lord, urging to performances which never can be reached, and reminding of deficiencies which under him never can be pardoned. If you will persist in looking upon heaven as the bargain of your services, then will you be dealt with according to the whole spirit of a bargain's demands and of a bargain's punctualities. Now it is in this respect that the law has ceased from his wonted capacity. The believer is rid of him and of all his commandments, viewed in the light of so many terms on the rendering of which eternal life is yours of challenged reward—yours of rightful and meritorious acquirement. All of you I trust are convinced, that on this footing eternal life were placed at an impracticable distance away from you. This was the old footing with the old husband; but now that he is dead, it is a footing on which, to the great relief of a sinful and sinning species, it no longer stands; and it is thus that we view the matter, when we say of the law that it is abolished as a covenant.

But, again, say our divines—while abolished as a covenant, it is not abolished as a rule of life. Though not under the economy of 'do and live,' still you are under the economy of 'live and do.' Your obedience to the law is no longer the purchase-money by which heaven is bought; but still your obedience to the law is the preparation by which you are beautified and arrayed for heaven. It is no longer the righteousness by which the rewards of eternity are earned; but still it is the righteousness which fits us to enjoy the sacred rest and the

hallowed recreations of eternity. It is no longer that by which you obtain such a title as qualifies you to challenge the glories and the felicities of paradise for your due; but still it is that by which you obtain such a taste as qualifies for partaking in the glories and the felicities of paradise for your best-loved enjoyment. To walk by rule is to walk on a particular and assigned way. And still, under the gospel as under the law, the way to heaven is the highway of holiness. Still is it as true in the present as in the former dispensation, that without holiness no man shall see God; and if it be no longer the gold by which you buy the inheritance, still it is the garment that you must put on ere you are permitted to enter on the possession of it.

The proprieties of the marriage state are substantially the same with the second husband as they were with the first. But while the one would chide you, the other would charm you into the performance of them; and we may add, that while the stern and authoritative precepts of the one never could have forced your compliance, because the will is not a subject for the treatment of force—the mild persuasions of the other, by his possession of this faculty, carry in them a power that is irresistible. And it is thus that Christ, who loved the Church and gave Himself for it, sanctifies and cleanses it with the washing of water by the word, that He may present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it may be holy and without blemish.

Thus it was the will of the first husband that you should keep the law, and still it is the will of the second also that you should keep the law. There is no distinction, in the matter of it, between the commandment of the one and the commandment of the other. What you ought to have done under the first economy, you still ought to do under the second. It were strange had it been otherwise. He who loveth righteousness, presented man with a draught of it on the tablet of the written law; and told him that on his obedience thereto, He would reward him with a joyful immortality. This reward has been forfeited by sinners, but redeemed by the Saviour of sinners; and still God, unchangeable as He is in His love of righteousness, and who had before pictured it forth in that perfect code of morality which by man has been violated—will now have it to be pictured forth on the character of man: And for this purpose does He put the law in his heart and write it out upon his mind; and that virtue which the first husband failed to enforce

does the second succeed in establishing, by engaging the gratitude and good-will and affection of His disciples on the side of it. That spiritual excellence which man could not find of himself, wherewith to purchase heaven, the Saviour finds for him, and spreads it out in goodly adornment upon his person, so as to prepare him for heaven. What the first husband would have exacted as a price the other lays on as a preparation; and the very duties that were required by the unrelenting taskmaster, but not rendered to him, are also required by the kind and friendly benefactor, who at the same time gives both a hand of strength and a heart of alacrity for all his services.

The difference between the two cases is somewhat like that which obtains between a family establishment and an establishment of hirelings. Every workman in the one is under the law of sobriety and good conduct, which if he violate, he will forfeit his situation. But if instead of a servant he is a son, it is not on any bargain of that kind that he is understood to retain the place of security and maintenance which he enjoys under the roof of his father. Yet though sobriety and good conduct are not laid upon him in the way of legalism—who does not see that the whole drift and policy of the patriarchal government under which he sits are on the side of all that is virtuous and amiable and praiseworthy on the part of its members? Who does not see that the desire of a father may still, without any legal economy of ‘do and live,’ be most earnestly set on all that is good and all that is graceful in the morality of his children? And while the thought never enters his bosom of anything else than that he should aid and sustain and advance them to the uttermost—yet, next to the desire that they should live, is it the most earnest desire of his heart that they should live and do—do all that can purify or embellish their own character, do all that is honourable to the name they wear. And thus are we under Christ as our second husband, or under the new family government of heaven—no longer servants but relatives—admitted to all the privileges of life, under the paternal and protecting roof of Him whose children we are in Christ Jesus. Still the conduct which as servants would not have been tolerated, as sons we are warned and chastised against; and the conduct that as servants would have been legally rewarded, as sons is most lovingly recommended to our strenuous and unceasing observation. And our heavenly Father loveth righteousness in us, and hateth iniquity in us; and that very law which He before

enforced under the penalty of our eternal exclusion from His presence, He now engages us to choose and to follow as the eternal characteristic of all His family : And our business now is to put ourselves in training for the joys and the exercises of this great spiritual household ; and for this purpose to cleave unto Christ as the Lord our Sanctifier—to betake ourselves to the aids of His grace, and resign our whole wills to the influence of that gratitude which should lead us to love and to imitate and to obey Him. Thus shall we bring forth fruit unto God—even those fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ unto His praise and unto His glory.

LECTURE XXXIX.

ROMANS VII. 5, 6.

"For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter."

THERE is a twofold change which takes place at the moment of a believer's transition into the peace and privileges of the gospel. He in the first place passes into a new condition, as it respects his legal relationship with God; and he in the second place passes into a new character, as it respects the feelings and principles by which he comes to be actuated. You know what his relationship to God is under the first economy in which he is situated. The moral Governor of our world ordained a law of rectitude, and authoritatively bound it on the observation of our species. That law has in every individual case been violated; and it were giving up the very conception of a moral government, did we delude ourselves with the imagination, that a certain penalty shall not follow in the train of an offence, or that condemnation shall not follow in the train of disobedience. This in fact were stripping the jurisprudence of Heaven of its sanctions, and so reducing the divine administration to a nullity; and this is the perpetual tendency of those who have not yet been arrested by the awful realities of the question. They hurry themselves away from the contemplation of God's inviolable majesty and uncompromising truth; and in the pleasing dream of His tenderness for the infirmities of His erring children, would they hull themselves into a sweet oblivion of the only elements on which hinge the fate of their eternity. It is indeed most true that God has all the love and the compassion and the amiable kindness wherewith they have invested Him; and the gospel of Jesus Christ is the very development of these attributes—the very expression of a longing and affectionate Father after His strayed children, for the purpose of recalling them; but at the same time of recalling them in that one way that shall

illustrate the entire character and perfection of the Godhead. It is a dispensation of mercy free to all, though of mercy through the medium of righteousness—not of a mercy which dethrones the law, but of a mercy which magnifies that law and makes it honourable—not of such an indulgence as would pour contempt on the face of the Divinity, but such an indulgence as pours a deep and awful consecration over it. We sit under the economy of grace, but of grace in conjunction with holiness; and the overtures of reconciliation—coming to us as they do through the channel of a mysterious atonement, and an unchangeable priesthood, and a mediatorship sealed with the blood of an everlasting covenant—come to us, if I may so express it, through such an intervening ceremonial, as serves to guard and to dignify the Sovereign, even in the freest exercise of His clemency to the sinful—so that they cannot by this path of access enter into peace with the Deity, without beholding Him in the awfulness of His purity, without feeling for Him the profoundest reverence.

From this rapid sketch of the great moral characteristics that adorn the economy of the gospel, you may come to understand how it is that the believer, on being translated into a new condition, is also moulded and transformed into a new character. It is easy to profess the faith, and a mere profession will induce no radical change on the habits or the history; but if a man actually have the faith, then he has that which never fails to be the instrument of a great spiritual renovation. It is upon this principle that he is prompted to comply with the overtures of the gospel; and in so doing he is made to feel what Nature never feels—a calm and confident sense of his own reconciliation with God. The man who has never experienced this sensation cannot adequately conceive of its delights and its influences; yet still may he have some distant imagination of the new feelings and the new impulses of which it is the harbinger. On this single event in the history of a believer's mind—that whereas formerly there was in it a distrust or a jealousy of God, there is now in it the assured conviction that the Almighty is his Friend—on this single event there is made to turn an entire revolution of its desires and its principles. In the language of the psalmist, its bonds are indeed loosed; and in place of that terror or that hopelessness which froze the soul into downright inactivity, is there now the freeness of a grateful and confiding spirit—the alacrity of a willing obedience. “I will run in the way of thy

commandments," says David, "when thou hast enlarged my heart." It is just this enlargement that is opened up to the disciple on his accepting of Christ, and so delivered from the fears and the fetters of legality. The mountain of a before inextinguishable debt is now liquidated; and a discharge is given by which from a peculiar skilfulness in the method of our salvation, the very justice of God, as well as His mercy, is guaranteed to the acceptance of the sinner; and he now has a comfort and an expectation in the service of that Being before whom he had hitherto stood paralysed, as if in the hands of an unappeased and unappeasable creditor; and the holiness which formerly he would have attempted in vain to render as his price or his purchase-money for that heaven the gate of which was shut against all his exertions, he now most cheerfully renders as his freewill-offering and his preparation for that heaven whose gate is now open to receive him; nor can he look to the whole process and principle of his recalment to the favour of God, without seeing depicted therein the love which that God bears to righteousness, and the hatred which He bears to iniquity. The very contemplation from which he gathers peace to his breast, brings down upon it also a purifying influence. The same spectacle of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, which charms from the believer's heart the fears of guilt, tells him in most impressive terms of the evil of it: And that deed of amnesty, on which are inscribed the characters of good-will to the sinner, is so emblazoned with the vestiges of God's detestation of sin, and so ratified by a solemn expiation because of it—that the intelligent disciple cannot miss the conclusion, nor will he fail to proceed upon it, that this is the will of God, even his sanctification.

I trust that even those of you who have no experience of this transition at all, and to whom I still speak as in a mystery, will at least admit, that when a man comes practically and powerfully under the operation of these influences, he must feel another moral pulse, and breathe another moral atmosphere from before. It is the doctrine of the Bible, that without supernatural aid the transition cannot be effected—that, even for the establishment of that faith which is the primary and presiding element of this great renewing process, an agency must descend upon us from on high which nevertheless it is our duty to watch and to pray for; and that unless from the first to the last we feel our dependence upon the Spirit of God, we shall not be upheld in those habits and affections of sacredness which constitute our meetness

for the inheritance that is above. But my purpose in introducing this remark is to demonstrate how wide is the dissimilarity in the whole frame and forthgoings of a man's mind after the accession of this influence from what they were before it—how certainly a new character, as well as a new condition, emerges from it: and when you connect the change with that which the Bible reveals to us of the power from the upper sanctuary by which it has been effected, you will be at no loss to perceive on the one hand, why converts to the faith of the gospel, as born of the Spirit are said to be in the Spirit; and on the other, you will be at as little loss to perceive the meaning of the apostle's phrase, 'when we were in the flesh'—when we were what nature originally made us; and before that transition by believing, which introduced another relationship with God, and introduced us to another habit and another disposition in regard to Him.

The apostle tells us what took place both with him and with his disciples at the time when they were in the flesh. Then did the motions of sins, which were by the law, work in their members to bring forth fruit unto death. We should like here to know in the first instance, what is meant by the phrase of 'sins which were by the law?' Some understand such things as were declared by the law to be sinful—as if the apostle had said, 'then did certain affections which by the law were pronounced sins, work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.' Others assign a still greater force to the law in this passage, as if the law had not only declared the affections in question to be sinful, but as if it was the law that had made them to be sinful. And indeed there is nothing hyperbolical in ascribing this function to the law—and that on the principle that where there is no law there is no transgression. If a man break no rule he is no sinner—and if there were positively no rule to break, then sin were an impossibility. It is the law that characterizes sin as sinful; that makes the affection to be sin which but for it would have been no sin at all—and that purely by forbidding it. So that it is quite fair to understand the motions of sins which were by the law, to be not merely such motions or desires as the law had declared to be sinful, but also such motions and desires as the law had actually constituted sinful.

But admitting both these explanations as quite consistent the one with the other, and as alike applicable to the passage before us, there are some who, additionally to these, would ascribe to the law an influence of a still more active and efficient quality

—as if it not only rendered certain affections sinful which but for it could not have obtained any such character, but as if it called forth into being the very affections themselves. They would make the law not merely a discoverer and an assertor of sin, but they would make it a provocative to sin; or an instrument for calling it into existence, as well as an instrument for detecting and exposing it. They think themselves warranted in this explanation by the text “that the law entered that the offence might abound;” and still more by the text, that “the law wrought in me all manner of concupiscence”—so that these last interpreters, in explaining the phrase, “the motions of sins which were by the law,” would not object to the idea of the law having actually excited these motions, and being thus the efficient originator of the sins that proceeded from them.

Nor is this view of the matter so much at war with the real experience of our nature as may at first be supposed. The law may irritate and inflame the evil propensities of the heart to greater violence. The yoke which it lays on human corruption may cause that corruption the more to fester and tumultuate. The perverse inclination is only fretted to a stouter and more daring assertion of itself by the thwarting resistance which it meets with; and you surely can conceive, nay, some of you may have found—how legal prohibitions, and remorseful visitations, and all the scruples of a remaining conscience and sense of rectitude in the bosom, which lie in the way of some vicious indulgence on which the appetite is set, may give the keener impulse to its demands, and make it more ungovernable than had there been no law. And when once all the barriers of principle are levelled, you may well imagine how, on the pressure and the prohibition being removed, the depraved tendency will burst out into freer and larger excesses; and the harder the struggle was ere the victory over a feeling of duty had been obtained, the prouder will be the rebel’s subsequent defiance of all its suggestions, and the more fierce and lawless will be his abandonment.

Nay, I can imagine how the existence and felt obligation of a law may, on minds of a more delicate cast, have somewhat of the same operation. It is not too subtle a remark, for there is substantial and experimental truth in it—that if the imputation of guilt lie hard upon a man, and he overwhelmed therewith sink into shame and despondency—in addition to losing his sense of character, he may lose the character itself. He will

come down in reality to the level of the surrounding estimation ; and you have only to envelop him in an atmosphere of disgrace, in order to impart a corresponding tinge of moral deterioration to the living principles by which he is actuated. This proves of what importance it is, for upholding the tone of character in society, that we should all be predisposed to turn to our fellows with kindness and confidence and respect ; and there is no saying how much the opposite habits of suspicion and detraction, and fiendish delight in the contemplation of human ignominy, may contribute to lower the real worth and dignity of our species. But our present aim is to show that by the very establishment of a law we become exposed to the sense of its violations ; and this degrading sense works a regardlessness of character, and lays us open to other and large violations : And thus the law may become not only declaratory of sin but creative of sin ; and that both by constituting certain actions to be sinful and multiplying these actions ; and in all these ways may we understand the phrase of our apostle, “ even the motions of sins, which are by the law.”

The remaining clause of this verse brings into view the distinction that there is between feeling the motions or tendencies of sin and the actual following of these tendencies. We have before abundantly insisted on the presence of sinful inclinations, even in the regenerated Christian ; but that he differs from him who is still in the flesh, in that while the one obeys the inclinations, the other utterly refuses to indulge or to gratify them. Paul himself was not exempted from the motions of sins ; and this is what he feelingly laments in the subsequent verses of this chapter. But then he did not suffer these motions so to work in him as to bring forth fruit unto death. It is of importance for the believer to understand, that so long as he abides in his present framework he occupies an infected tenement—he bears about with him a vile body charged with a moral virus from the presence of which death alone can deliver him ; and against the power of which, it is his appointed warfare so to struggle, as that it shall not have the practical ascendancy over him. This is the inward constitution even of a saint upon earth—a constant urgency to evil. But what distinguishes him from the wilful sinner is, that he so resists this urgency that it does not prevail. There is no conflict with the one ; for he walks altogether in the counsel of his own heart, and altogether in the sight of his own eyes. With the other there is the con-

flict of two opposite principles—of the Spirit lusting against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit; but so as that the Spirit has the habitual predominance, and that by the Spirit he is practically led. They who are in the flesh have no such principle of counteraction within them to their evil tendencies—so that the motions of sin which are in them work in their members so as to bring forth fruit unto death.

Paul now under the power of the gospel, and in the full career of his sanctification, speaks of his being in the flesh as a thing of remembrance. He could now look back upon that state with the full advantage of a tender and enlightened conscience, which recognised as sinful what he before had never charged himself with, as incurring the guilt of any violation that should infer death. He was even then free from the grosser profligacies of human wickedness, and lived in the deceitful security of one who thought that all his doings were adequate to all his obligations. But he now could discern, that unblemished as he was in respect of all outward enormities, he was then wholly given over to the idolatry of his own will; and that when tried by a law which questioned him of his godliness—of his preference for the Creator above the creature—of his obedience to the commandment, that he should covet and desire no earthly good so much as the favour of that Being at whose bidding he ought to have subordinated all the affections of his heart—when thus tried, he could now plainly perceive, that at that time he was altogether carnal, and not the less so that at that time too he was altogether satisfied with himself. But the difficulty is to make that which was a thing of remembrance to Paul after he was converted, a thing of present consciousness to those who are not yet converted. It is true, it was on the eve of his becoming a Christian that the conviction of sin first seized him—nay, this very conviction may have been the instrument of turning him to the gospel. And therefore it is the more desirable to reach the same conviction to the hearts of those who are still in the flesh and now hearing me—to make them understand, how wholly it is that they are in the flesh—how unreservedly they give themselves up to the impulse of all those constitutional tendencies which result from the existing mechanism of their soul and body and spirit, without any control upon it from the accession of a principle of godliness—how much they live and talk and feel just as they would have done though the idea of a God were never present to them—so, in fact, as to be as far as

possible from the habit of glorifying the Lord with their soul and body and spirit, which are the Lord's.

For the purpose of awakening this conviction, the thing wanted is both a more tender and a more lofty conception of the divine law. Where there is glaring deceit, or fell malignity, or abandoned licentiousness in the action—there may be less of difficulty in tracing it to the operation of such propensities, as in truth work those palpable deeds of disobedience which obviously and undeniably have their fruit unto death. But when the actions are, for example, those of industry in a lawful calling, or of light-heartedness in a gay and harmless amusement, or of courteousness in a circle of decent and estimable companionship—surely they are such actions as a Christian may perform; and in what circumstances, it may be asked, do they indicate the performer of them to be still in the flesh, and under the dominion of such appetites as bring forth fruit unto death? Whatever difficulty we may feel in answering this question, it can be replied to, and on a clear and intelligible principle too, by that law which is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. You are still in the flesh, if what you habitually do is not done unto God. However more amiable and more refined your species of worldliness may be than that of another, yet still, if you are not walking with God, you are walking after the flesh, and you move in a pictured world of atheism. Such may be your dark and obtuse apprehensions of the spiritual morality of the law, that the general drift of your affections being away from God and set upon earthly things, they may not appear to the eye of your contemplation as being very deeply tinged with the hue and character of criminality. But by the law itself this is declared to be a state and habit of the soul that is exceeding sinful; and all that is devised and done under that dominant and unquelled spirit of secularity—which is the universal spirit of unrenewed and unregenerated nature, is done by those who are still in the flesh, and all the desires of whose hearts bring forth fruit unto death.

To quicken you from this state—to transform secularity into sacredness—to make those who are dead in trespasses and sins alive unto God—to usher you into other feelings and other principles than those which unchristianized humanity ever can exemplify; this in fact is the great and ultimate design of the gospel, which, after translating you into another condition, also transforms you into another character.

Ver. 6.—‘That being dead wherein we were held,’ might be rendered ‘Having died in Him in whom we were held.’ The law has wreaked the whole force of its vindication on the head of our great Sacrifice; and this is tantamount to our having borne the penalty ourselves, and so, by our death in Christ, being delivered from an infliction that has now gone by. The law has no further reckoning with us on the old principle of ‘do this and live.’ We are not now under what the apostle in another place calls the ministry of condemnation, or under the authority of what he in the same place calls the letter that killeth. The commandment no longer frowns upon us from the place which it before occupied when written on tables of stone; but it is now felt in persuasive influence within us, because written now on the fleshy tablets of our heart. It no longer acts as a master, who drives his reluctant slaves into a forced compliance with his bidding; or keeps them in perpetual terror, under the consciousness of a displeasure which no act or strength of theirs can allay. It is now their hearts’ desire, instead of their constrained drudgery, to fulfil the requisitions of the law. The honest struggle in which they are embarked, is to make head against all that corruption of nature, which would incline them to disobedience; and now in the hands of an approving friend who deals out to them supplies of grace and strength for the warfare, they serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

So that whatever the change be which takes place on this transition from nature to the gospel, it is not such a change as carries an exoneration from service along with it. It may be service in another spirit, and under a different stimulus from before; but still it is service. There is nothing in the true faith of Christianity which exempts its disciples from the active performances of virtue, or from the most assiduous cultivation of all moral and of all spiritual excellence. So that there must in some way be a misapprehension of the matter, when it is thought of the New Testament or of the evangelical system that is contained in it—as if it annulled every motive to righteousness, or substituted the contemplation and the quietism of a mystic theology in place of those moralities by which human life is adorned, and which send a powerful and practical impulse to the conduct on the busy walks of human society.

It may be difficult on this subject to reach the understanding of those who have not the experimental feeling of it; but still

perhaps they may be able to apprehend what the leading characteristics are of that service which is rendered in the oldness of the letter. Under this economy, heaven is held out to man as the reward of his obedience—an inheritance for which he must pay value; and that never will be his without the purchase-money of certain specified merits, and certain prescribed services. There is something in this state of matters that is powerfully calculated to set man agoing; and more particularly when he understands it to be the alternative, that, should he lose heaven, he will have his part through eternity among the unquenchable torments and ever-during agonies of hell. And so without any love to virtue in itself, but from the single principle of regard to his own safety—without any native hatred of sin, but from the terror of that awful and intolerable vengeance which he conceives to be attached to it—may he be set on a most laborious course of dutiful and diligent and painstaking obedience. Now only suppose him to have a just imagination of the law, of its high demands, and of his countless deficiencies therefrom; and do you not perceive, that after all, they are the jealousies of distrust, and the scrupulosities of fearfulness, and the mercenary feelings of a bargain, and the extorted homage of sordid and slavish devoteeship, and in a word, the desires or the dreads of selfishness—that form the main constituents of that old legal service which it is the purpose of the gospel to supersede? But the most blasting circumstance of the whole is, that the primary influence by which this course of obedience has been originated, and by which it continues to be sustained, is not the love of rectitude at all, but of a something in the shape of reward that is distinct from rectitude; and not a spontaneous aversion of the heart to sin, but the recoil of animal or physical nature from that suffering which follows in its train. There are no great moral characteristics to stamp or to signalize the activities of such a service; and to view man plodding and drivelling in this career, is to view him the mere creature of his own personal interests, the degraded bondsman of his own fears.

From this view of what it is to serve God in the oldness of the letter, let us proceed to the view of what it is to serve Him in the newness of the spirit. Under this economy the door of heaven is thrown open to a sinful world; and the signals of invitation are hung out from all its portals; and instead of being proposed as the unattainable reward of an obedience utterly beyond the power of humanity, it is held forth in the

character of an accessible gift by God through Jesus Christ our Lord. But then it is not a heaven of sensuality : it is a heaven of sacredness. It is not a place for the recreation of animal nature : it is a place for the high recreation of the moral and spiritual faculties. It is described as the land of uprightness ; and its main delight as lying in the play of holy affections, regaled by holy exercises. No man can purchase heaven by his virtue ; yet no man can be happy in heaven without virtue—for virtue is the element of heaven ; and without the preparation of a virtuous heart and a virtuous character, all the appropriate ecstasies of that pure and lofty region you would be incapable of sharing in. On this single change in the relation between virtue and heaven, do you pass from service in the oldness of the letter to service in the newness of the spirit. Your virtue is not the price of heaven ; for then all the jealousies of a bargain, and the freezing apprehensions of legality, would degrade it from a thing of spontaneous love to a thing of selfishness. But virtue is your indispensable preparation for heaven, to which you are freely beckoned in the gospel by all the tokens of welcome and good-will ; and the man who has this believingly in his eye, forthwith enters with a new-born alacrity and delight on the career of holiness. He loves it, not for any distinct or separate reward, but he loves it for itself ; and gratitude to Him who poured out His soul as an expiation for his sins engages his affection to it the more ; and the soul, disengaged from all anxieties about a debt which Christ hath extinguished and a condemnation which Christ hath done away, is now at leisure and at liberty for the prosecution of all moral excellence ; and the law, put into his heart by the Spirit of God, is now his heart-felt delight, instead of being as before his hopeless and unavailing drudgery. He has become a new creature. The taste and the affection of holy angels have been given to him ; and we refer to you all—on comparing the service that is prompted by a love for the reward of the law with the service that is prompted by a love to the righteousness of the law—which of the two presents you with virtue in its most generous style of exhibition, and which of them it is that forms the highest and the noblest offering.

It might perhaps help to clear this matter, did we think that the great object of the economy under which we sit is to become like unto God. Now, it is not for reward that God is righteous ; but the love of righteousness for itself is the original property of

His nature. Neither is it under the dread of punishment that He shuns iniquity ; but it is because He hates iniquity. There is nought of legalism in the morality of the Godhead ; but it is a morality which springs from the primitive and emanating fountains of His own character, and spreads out in free and spontaneous efflorescence over all His ways. It is not with a prospective regard to some future heaven, that is to be adjudged to Him from a tribunal which is loftier than Himself—it is not under an influence like this that God is so observant of truth, and so strict in justice, and of such unwearied beneficence. These, in fact, have constituted His heaven from eternity ; and it is just this spiritual heaven, the delight of which lies in its love and in its holiness—it is this, and no other, that awaits those who are here admitted to the number of His children through the faith which is in Christ, and have the family likeness imparted to them. Then it is that you pass from the oldness of the letter to the newness of the Spirit—when, instead of toiling at the observations of virtue for a sordid reward, distinct and separate from virtue itself, you are prompted to the observations of virtue by the spontaneous love which you bear to it. This alone is true moral excellence, purified of all that taint of selfishness, by which it were otherwise debased and vitiated ; and it is only when transformed into this that you are formed again after the image of God in righteousness and in true holiness.

LECTURE XL.

ROMANS VII. 7-13.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful."

THE apostle had before affirmed as much as that it was the law which constituted that to be sinful which without the law could have had no such character ascribed to it—nay perhaps, that even the law called forth into living energy and operation certain sinful affections, which but for it acting as a provocative might have lain within us in a state of latent and of unobserved dormancy. And he seems to feel in this verse as if this might, in the apprehension of his readers, attach the same sort of odiousness to the law that is attached to sin itself. This charge against the law he repels with the utmost vehemence and decision, and that sort of readiness which carries somewhat of the expression of indignancy along with it. And the first consideration that he calls to his aid is, that the law acted as a discoverer of sin. He had not known sin but by the law; and he had not known lust, or as some would understand this clause, he had not known the sinfulness of lust, or he had not known lust to be sinful, except the law had said, 'Thou shalt not covet.' It is no impeachment against the evenness of a ruler, that, by the application of it to any material surface, you can discover all that is crooked or unequal thereupon. On the contrary, its very power of doing so proves how straight and unerring it is in itself; and the more minute the deviations are which it can manifest to the eye of the observer, the greater is the evidence that is afforded

to the perfection of the instrument that you are using. The light of day may reveal a spot of impurity, or a soil in the colouring of the object that you contemplate, which could not be recognised under the shade of midnight, nor yet in the duskiness of approaching even; yet who would ever think on that account of ascribing to the beautiful element of light any of that pollution or deformity which the light has brought forth to observation? The character of one thing may come more impressively home to our discernment by its contrast with the character of another thing; and the stronger the contrast is between the two, the more intense may our perception become of the distinct and appropriate character of each. But it were indeed very strange, if the dissimilarity of these two things should be the circumstance that led us to confound them; or if because when placed beside each other the one became more palpably an object of disgust than if viewed separately—the other should not on that very account, become more palpably and more powerfully the object of our admiration. When one man stands before you in the full lustre and loveliness of moral worth, and another loathsome in all the impurities of vice and wickedness—the very presence of the first may generate in the heart of the observer a keener sensation of repugnancy towards the second; and this not surely because they have anything in common, but because they have everything in wide and glaring opposition. It were indeed a most perverse inference to draw from the fact of virtue having shed an aspect of greater hatefulness on the vice that is contiguous to it, that therefore it must gather upon itself the same hue and the same hatefulness which it has imparted to the other. This were altogether reversing the property of a foil, which is certainly not to obscure but to heighten the opposite excellence. And the same of sin and of the law. The law is the ruler which marks and exposes the crookedness of sin—not because crooked itself, but because precisely and purely rectilinear. And it is the light which reveals the blackness and the darkness of sin—not because these are its own properties, but because of its clear and lucid transparency. And it is the bright exemplar of virtue which rebukes and vilifies all the wickedness that it looks upon, not surely because of any vileness imputable to it, but because of the force wherewith it causes this imputation to descend, from the elevation of its own unclouded purity, on the dross and the degradation and the tarnish by which it is surrounded. So that to the question, ‘Is the law therefore sin

because it makes sin known?'—the answer is, No. It makes sin known, not because of any participation at all in its character, but because of its strong and total dissimilarity.

Ver. 8.—But from the first clause of this verse it would appear, that the law does more than make the deformity more noticeable and more odious than before. It is even the occasion of aggravating that deformity, by making sin more actively rebellious, and causing it to be the more foul and more abundant in its deeds of atrocity. There can be no doubt of the fact, that the law of God does not cure what the apostle here calls the concupiscence of men, or in other words, the desire of man's heart towards any forbidden indulgence; and this desire not being cured by the law, is just thereby heated and exasperated the more. The very remorse that follows in the train of any violation is of itself a constant feeder of the mind with such suggestions and images as serve to renew the temptation to what is evil. It is ever bringing the thoughts into contact with such objects as before overcame the purposes of the inner man, and may again overcome them; and the very consciousness of having broken a law, by perpetually adhering to the heart and pervading it with the conviction of sin, is just as perpetually operating on the heart with the excitements of sin. The man who does what is morally wrong, and thinks no more of it, may never repeat the transgression till its outward influences have again come about him, after it may be the interval of many days or months, and prevailed over him as before. But the man who is conscience-stricken because of his iniquity, and who is ever brooding under a sense of guilt and degradation, and who ever and anon recurs to it as the ceaseless topic of his many cogitations and many cares—such a man has the image of allurements present to his thoughts, and that too during the whole extent of those frequent and lengthened intervals of time when they are not present to his senses. And thus does the law turn out an occasional cause why with him there should be both a more intense and a more abiding fermentation of all the sinful appetites of our nature, than with another, who, reckless of law and undisturbed by its accusing voice, lives at random, and more under the impulse of outward events than of his own inward propensities and inward processes. And what adds to the helplessness of this whole calamity is, that while the law thus scourges the unhappy victim of remorse, it gives him no strength and no encouragement for the warfare. It gives a new assailing

force to his enemies, but no force of resistance to himself; because, depriving him of the inspiring energy that is in hope, it gives him in its place the dread and the desperation of an outlaw. It tells *how* by its unrelenting power and its irrevocable curse he is undone; and he, by a process which in fact is oft exemplified in the sad history of many an apostate, may, just because of his sensibilities at one time to the law of God, have now become the more sunken in all profligacy, the more daring and determined in all wickedness.

And yet the law is not here in fault. It is sin which is in fault. The law is not the proper and primary fountain of all this mischief. It is sin which took occasion by the law—which, at sight of the law, strengthened itself the more in its own character, and felt a more decided impulse than ever to the emission of all those evil influences on the heart of man by which all manner of concupiscence is wrought therein. Which of the two parties then—sin or the law—deserves the blame and the odiousness? It is conceivable of the worthless reprobate that he may be brought into the presence of him who stands high and pure and undoubted in all moral estimation; and that he sickens, either with envy or in despair, at the contemplation of an excellence which he cannot reach; and that the reaction which descends upon him from the elevation of another's virtue he is now looking to, may but fortify him with greater spite and tenaciousness than ever in all his purposes of evil. Though such be practically the result of such an interview, will not the sainted holiness and integrity of the good man still shine out in the same cloudless and unimpeached lustre as before? and will not all the hardening and all the resoluteness of depravity which his presence has created in the bosom of another, just serve to bring down upon that other a still feller and heavier imputation? And it is just so with the two parties whose merits the apostle is employed in adjusting in the passage before us. It is not the commandment which works all manner of concupiscence; but it is sin which taketh occasion by the commandment; and it all goes to aggravate the moral hideousness of our nature, that on the approach of so pure and righteous a visitor as the law of God, it is thereby prompted to break forth into more audacious rebellion, and to give itself up to the excesses of a more loose and lawless abandonment.

And it is in this sense, and in this sense only, that the law is the occasion of death to those who have disobeyed it. This

sore infliction is primarily and properly due to sin, which taketh occasion by the law. It is conceivable, as we have already said, that the very company of a man of righteousness might so distance and so degrade in his own eyes a man of iniquity, as that, with the desperate feeling of an outcast from all honourable estimation, he might henceforth give himself over to the full riot and extravagance of villany. He might even under this process of depravation have become a murderer; and so entailed upon himself a death of vengeance for the death of violence that he inflicted upon another. But who would ever think of laying either his own blood, or the blood of his victim, to the door of him whose excellence had only called out into more open decision and display the hatefulness of his own character? Even though this man of righteousness had been his judge, and had passed upon him the sentence of execution for his crimes—yet who does not see that his crimes are all his own; and that even though provoked into being by the view of another's worth, or by the galling prohibitions of the righteous example or of the righteous authority that had been brought to bear upon him, that still this only served to blazon and to enhance his own turpitude, without transferring one particle either of its guilt or of its foulness to the pure and honourable arbiter of his destiny? And so again of the parties—even sin and the law. The law is the exemplar of perfect virtue, and it is the expounder of perfect virtue; and she may further be regarded as the executioner of virtuous wrath on all who have disowned and have defied her. And if so be, that they have been excited to a prouder and more tumultuous defiance, by the very restraints which the presence of the law has imposed upon them, this just makes their sin more exceeding sinful—both bringing it out to more glaring exhibition, and stamping a deeper atrocity upon its character.

Thus much for the first clause of this eighth verse—and as we wish not to repeat more than enough, we would make these illustrations serve for the tenth, eleventh, and thirteenth verses, which we now read out in your hearing—only adding one observation about sin taking occasion by the commandment to *deceive* in order to destroy. It slays its victim by a process of deception of which the law is made the instrument. It may do this in various ways and by various wiles. As the man's remorse is continually leading him to brood over the transgression, so sin may take advantage of this employment, and follow

it up by leading the man to dwell as constantly on the temptation which led to it. Or it may represent the man to himself as the doomed and irrecoverable victim of a law that can never be appeased by any subsequent obedience—and thus, through means of this law, again may it drive him onward to the profligate excesses of a ruthless desperado. Or, changing its device and its policy, it may soothe him in a favourite though forbidden indulgence, by setting forth to his remembrance the many offerings which he hath already rendered to this same law; and the many conformities of honesty, or temperance, or compassion, or courteousness, by which he still continues to do it honour. And lastly, it may even turn his very compunction into a matter of complacency, and persuade the man, that in defect of the homage of his obedience to the law it is at least well that he gives it the homage of his regret for his many violations—and so with a feeling of very tolerable security, may he spend his life in a constant alternation of sinning and sorrowing; of first offending his conscience by the freedoms of his life, and then of quieting it again by the feelings of a bosom where all sense of the commandment and of its obligations has not yet decayed into utter annihilation. And in these various ways may a process of depravation be going on, under the guise of much solemn and reverential acknowledgment; and the man be betrayed into peace where there is no peace; and sin be ripening into full ascendancy, even where its triumphs are mingled with the terrors and the sighs of penitency; and at length, through the medium of many legal formalities and legal feelings, acquiring a supreme authority in that heart which is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

We now direct your attention to the last clause of the eighth verse. 'For without the law sin was dead'—dead in respect of all power to condemn you, had there been actually no law, or had its authority been really extinguished; and dead in respect of its inability to stir up the alarms of condemnation in your heart, had the sense or feeling of its authority been extinguished: and, in both cases, dead as to its power of seducing or enslaving you by means of a remorse that were thus obliterated, or of terrors that would thus never agitate the bosom. All this, on the supposition of being without the law, or without any sense in your heart either of its high requisitions, or of the high and unalterable sanctions which enforced the observation of them. And in the next verse Paul is visited with the remembrance of his

own state in a former period of his history—when ignorant as he was of the exceeding breadth of God's commandment, when unaware of the reach which it took into the very secrecy of his affections and desires, when not adverting to its character as a searching and a spiritual law, he looked forward to a life of favour here and of blessedness hereafter, on the strength of his many outward compliances and his many literal observations. He was thus alive without the law once; and it was not till the commandment came—not till it revealed to him the whole extent of its authority and its cognisance—not till he was made to see what its lofty demands were, and what his wretched and irrecoverable deficiencies therefrom—not till then was it that sin revived in him; that its terrors and its convictions awoke upon his soul; that it stirred him up to such restless and unavailing struggles as shortened not his distance from perfection: and perhaps while it whetted his remorse, it gave a darker and more desperate character to his rebellion; or at all events dispossessed him from the proud security of his old imaginations, and made him see, that instead of a victorious claimant for the rewards of the law, he was the trembling victim of its menaces and its penalties.

Ver. 9.—The state that Paul here describes as being at one time his own, is in fact the prevalent state of the world. The men of it live in tolerable comfort and security all their days; and that just because blind to those awful and besetting realities by which they are encompassed—and dead to the tender invitations of the gospel, only because dead to the terrifying menaces of the law. They are without all adequate sense of its obligations, or of the power and certainty of His wrath who established it, and who will see to it that its authority shall be maintained, and its many threats and many proclamations shall one and all of them be verified. It is because the sinner is without the law, or without any strong and affecting conviction of all the places in his heart and in his history to which its government extends, that he sees not the danger of the condition which he occupies, nor reflects upon himself as a transgressor, whose condemnation even unto spiritual and everlasting death is altogether due to its violated honours. Not till the law came did Paul look upon himself as a doomed and devoted malefactor, thankful for the offered pardon of the gospel, and humbly acquiescing in its proposals and its ways for his acceptance with God. And thus it is that we count it so highly important, when

the Spirit lends His efficacy to our demonstrations of the might and majesty of the divine law—when He thereby arouses the careless sinner out of his lethargies, and causes him to see that there is a coming wrath from which there is no escaping but by an offered gospel—when by the terrors of the Lord, He persuades the man to flee for refuge to the hope set before him there—when He opens his eyes to the dread exhibition of his own guilt, and of the fiery vengeance that out of Christ and away from His cross is sure to overtake it—when He thus pursues him as with an arrow sticking fast, and lets him not alone, till, an awed and a humbled penitent, he is glad to stretch forth his hand to the propitiation which God hath set forth unto the world, and so to wash out his sins in the blood of the Lamb.

Ver. 12.—The apostle had already delivered the law from all charge of odiousness because of the death which it inflicted, and because of the sin which it exposed—and even excited with greater fierceness and power in a sinner's heart. And now does he render it the positive homage of all that acknowledgment which was due to its real character—as the tablet or the representation of all moral excellence—bodied forth from the conceptions of the Divinity Himself, into an authoritative model of perfection—and (had man taken upon his soul the fair and the full impression of it) conveying from Him who is the fountain-head of virtue, the lovely impress of its accomplishments and its graces to the creatures whom He had formed. If the law be the occasion of death, or of more fell and frightful depravity to its subjects, it is not because of any evil that is in its character, but because of the evil of that sin which is in their nature. Such an effect may demonstrate the malignity of sin, or show more strikingly than before the exceeding sinfulness thereof. But it can in no way be construed into an impeachment against the law—which stands exonerated of all the mischief which ought properly and primarily to be referred to the corruption of our own hearts. That vice should gather itself into an attitude of more stout and shameless defiance, at the sight or at the bidding of virtue—is indeed a fell aggravation of all the enormities wherewith it is chargeable ; but still virtue shines forth with untarnished lustre, or rather enhanced in all fair and righteous estimation, when thus placed by the side of this contiguous worthlessness : or the law by which virtue is portrayed and virtue is enacted, still retains her primitive and endearing characters of being wise and holy and just and good.

This may lead to the solution of a question, by which the legal heart of man often feels itself embarrassed and exercised—a question which we have often attempted to treat and to resolve in your hearing; and by which we may have succeeded in laying for a season the obstinate legalism of nature. But it recurs again with its unquelled difficulties, and its unappeased longings after a reward and a righteousness of its own; and with its eye open to the palpable truth that God still urges upon us that very law by which our justification is impossible—that under the economy of the gospel works are still in imperative demand, even after grace has been proclaimed to us as the only way of salvation—the perplexity from which it wants to be unriddled is, Why should the law that is now deposed from the office to which it was at one time ordained of being a minister unto life, and has now become a minister unto death—why should it still be kept up in authority and importance, and obedience to it be as strenuously required, and a conformity of character to it be held as indispensable under our present dispensation as under the old one?

In order that God should will our obedience to the law, it is not necessary to give to obedience the legal importance and efficacy that it had under the old dispensation. All that is necessary to make God delight in the morality of His creatures, and that He should please their observation of it, is that this morality be to Him in itself a gladdening object of contemplation. There was a material chaos at the outset of our present system—out of which the Spirit of God, moving upon the face of the waters, educes the loveliest forms of hill and dale and mighty ocean and waving forests, and all that richness of bloom and verdure and vegetable beauty which serves to dress and to diversify the landscapes of nature. And it is said that God saw everything to be good, and rejoiced over the works of His creative hand. Now there was no legality whatever in this most obvious and intelligible process. The ornaments of a flower, or the gracefulness of a tree, or the soft magnificence of a whole extended and outspread scenery—these are not and cannot be the offerings of inanimate matter, by which it purchases the smile and the regards of the Divinity. And yet it is with the smiles of complacency that the Divinity does regard them. The Almighty Artist loves to behold the fair composition that He Himself has made; and wills each of His works to be perfect in its kind; and dwells with satisfaction and joy on the

panorama of visible excellence that He has spread before His throne; and rather would He look to the freshness of its many decorations, than to a universal blight of nature, when every flower should sicken upon its stalk, and all those pencilled hues by which the surface of our earth is adorned should be swept away by the pestilence of a tainted atmosphere above it. So that in a case to which legality is quite inapplicable, does God prefer His creatures to be of one form and comeliness rather than another—does He love beauty rather than deformity, and harmony rather than confusion; and when He did put forth on the dark and chaotic mass of warring elements the power of His transforming hand, it was to spread out a scene of loveliness before Him, and to lavish upon it the gayest and the goodliest adornments.

And the same of the moral taste of the Godhead. He loves what is wise and holy and just and good in the world of mind; and with a far higher affection too than He loves what is fair and graceful and comely in the world of matter. He has a pleasure in beholding what may be styled a moral comeliness of character; and the office of His Spirit at this moment is to evolve this beauteous exhibition out of the chaos of ruined and rebellious humanity. And to forward this process it is not necessary that man be stimulated to exertion by the motives of legalism. All that is necessary is, that man be submitted to the transforming operations of the divine Spirit; and that he shall willingly follow His impulses, at the will of that God who requires it of him. And must God, we ask, ere He can gratify His relish for the higher beauties of morality and of mind, first have to make a bargain about it with His creatures? Is not His creative hand as free to follow the impulses of His taste for the beauties of moral, as for the beauties of material landscape? Out of the corporeal chaos did He, in obedience to His love of order and gracefulness in our visible world, educe all that symmetry and splendour and perfect organization by which we are surrounded, and He rejoices over them. This was His will of matter, even its harmonization. And in like manner does He now operate on a spiritual chaos; and out of the malice and impurity and rebellious deviation from God, and all the jarring influences by which it is agitated and deformed, does He educe love and peace and beauteous accordancy with the perfect law of heaven. This is His will of mind, even its sanctification. He does not need to truckle or negotiate with us upon the subject,

or to enter into any such legal understanding on the matter, as in fact to lay the burden of an impossibility on the whole process—for, in truth, man has forfeited every legal reward, and incurred every legal penalty—so that the whole of this economy must be set aside, and man be approached by some new power, and be plied with some new expedients, ere he can be restored to the holiness and the excellence in which he was created. Meanwhile it is the will of God that he should be restored ; and just as He rejoiced at every step in that process whereby the chaos of matter was evolved into a fair and orderly system, so does He rejoice in that process by which we grow unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus ; and He looks with intent eye on the Church that He is now forming out of the world and on every member of it—so that, released though you all be from the old legal enforcements of that commandment which is contained in ordinances, still is it the thing which His heart is set upon, and still do you testify your love to God and your desire to comply with His will, when you keep His commandments.

It is thus, and on this principle, that God wills you to be holy and just and good ; but these are the very attributes which the text gives to the law, or to the commandment—so that though the old relationship between you and the law is dissolved, still it is this very law with the requirements of which you are to busy yourselves during the whole of your abode in the world ; and with the graces and accomplishments of which you must appear invested before Christ at the judgment-seat. It was written first on tables of stone, and the process was then that you should fulfil its requisitions as your task, and be paid with heaven as a reward. It is now written by the Holy Ghost on the tablets of your heart ; and the process now is that you are made to delight in the law after the inward man—and when released, as you will be by death, from the corruptions of the outward man, heaven will be open for your admission as the only place that is fitted to harbour and to regale you. You know of gold that it has two functions. With gold you may purchase a privilege, or with gold you may adorn your person. You may not be able to purchase the king's favour with gold ; but he may grant you his favour, and when he requires your appearance before him, it is still in gold he may require you to be invested. And thus of the law. It is not by your own righteous conformity thereto that you purchase God's favour ; for this has been already purchased by the pure gold of the Saviour's

righteousness, and is presented to all who believe on Him. But still it is with your own personal righteousness that you must be gilded and adorned. It is not the price wherewith you have bought heaven, but it is the attire in which you must enter it; and thus do we answer the question, why it is that the law is still kept up in authority and importance, and obedience to it is as strenuously required, and a conformity of character to it is held as indispensable under the new dispensation as under the old one.

LECTURE XLI.

ROMANS VII. 14-25.

"For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

ERE I enter into detail upon these verses, let me come forth with a preliminary argument upon that which appears to be the subject of them.

There is one thing which the common experience of all, whether they be in the faith of the gospel or not, must have made perfectly familiar to them; and that is the exceeding difference which they have often felt, between the whole tone and temper of their mind at one time from what it is at another time. There are many of you who can recollect, that in church, and when under the influence of a powerful demonstration from the pulpit—you caught something like the elevation and purity of heaven upon your souls; and that then when you passed into another atmosphere, whether at home in the midst of your family, or abroad among the collisions of society and business, the whole of this ethereal temperament went into utter dissipation; and you became a peevish and sensual and earthly creature. Some of you may have marked it well how differently it fares with you in the hour of your devotional retirement and in the season of your exposure to the manifold urgencies of the world—how the heart seems to have passed as entirely into another mood by the transition, as if it had been transformed into another heart altogether—that in the one state you can rise on the wings of divine

contemplation, and breathe of the air of the upper sanctuary; and in the other you sink down to the commonplace of tame and ordinary life, and become as other men. We think that this may have been the finding of many who are not, in the spiritual and substantial sense of the term, Christians at all; but who in the mere fervency of natural emotion, can be put into something like a glow of sacredness, whether by a certain power of sympathy with the preacher, or in the musings and meditative exercises of their own solitude. It will not surprise them when they are told of two principles in our moral constitution—which, by the ascendancy of the one or the other of them for the time being, may cause the same man to appear in two characters that are not only different, but are in total and diametric opposition. Of this their own piety, meagre and capricious and merely sentimental though it be, may have given them a very strong experimental illustration: And so have convinced them how possible it is, that, in one and the same individual of our species, there may be one set of tendencies, which if followed out would liken him to the seraph who revels among the choirs and ecstasies of Paradise; and also another set of tendencies, which, if also followed out, would liken him to the veriest grub-worm that moils for lucre upon earth, or finds all his satisfaction in the basest and most sordid gratifications.

But we further conceive that the same thing may be rendered palpable to those who are so far absorbed in worldliness as to be totally unobservant of piety—whether in its private or in its public observations; and who, apart from every experience of their own frame either at church or in the closet, may still have been sensible to other exhibitions of themselves, which might reconcile them to the doctrine which we shall forthwith labour to establish. Even they have often been admitted to such a view of human nature upon their own personal character and history, as might prove how strangely compounded it is of diverse and opposite inclinations. So extensive in our day is the class of novel-readers, that we may have the chance of bearing home upon not a few who are here present, when we appeal to a very common experience among those who are most enamoured of this species of literature—how readily their hearts have conformed to all that was bright or beautiful in the moral scenery of fiction—how they could kindle into its heroism, and melt into its tenderness, and weep with very delight over its representations of worth or generosity or devoted attachment, and appear for a

season, and while under the power of that master-hand which pictures out virtue with such force and exquisiteness, to be assimilated themselves to that which they so vehemently admire. And yet all goeth to flight when again ushered into the scenes of familiar existence; and the mind of the reader is speedily vulgarized again to the level of all that is tame and ordinary around it—inso much that he who from one part of his nature could rise to lofty enthusiasm while engaged in the contemplation of rare and romantic excellence—could from another part of his nature, pass in less than half an hour to the very plainest characteristic of plain and every-day humanity; and either fret or scold or laugh or give full indulgence to every one of those very ordinary passions which come out of the feelings and the fellowship of very ordinary men.

There is one principle of our constitution that tends as it were to sublime the heart up to the poetry of human life; and there is another principle that, operating as a drag, weighs the heart as if helplessly down to the prose of it. There is not a man who mixes literature with business, as many do who are now before me, that might not be conscious in himself of two warring elements, which if they were to change places, so that the one which wont to be the superior shall become the subject—would make a new creature of him. There are two rival appetites, in being at least, though only one may so domineer as to have all the power and practical ascendancy over the character. But in point of fact, were the other to rebel and to rise into a gathering strength that should dethrone the old tyrant and establish its own supremacy, then would the spirit of the mind undergo an entire renovation; and the phrase of his 'being born again' were not too strong a one to express the transition of heart and of habit that should take effect upon him. But meanwhile it will suffice that you be aware of certain moving forces that do exist at the same time in your moral economy; and which act in directions that are contradictory the one to the other—and according to the prevalence of which it is that you may appear either in one light to the eye of an observer, or in another that is altogether opposite.

We have heard of a great lady proprietor in one of our slave plantations, who never could read a fictitious tale of suffering but with tenderness and tears, yet could enforce the severest punishments on her wretched and overdriven negroes, and could look unrelentingly on while she beheld the rigid execution of

them. This may be an extreme case ; but it is no anomaly in the character of our species. It is but one of a kindred and very extensive class of phenomena, which all go to prove such to be the nature of man, that while under one sort of influence he may be so operated upon as to exhibit all that is graceful in sensibility, he, under another sort of influence, may be so operated upon as to act the monster of savage cruelty among the ill-fated victims who are under him. The individual of whom we have now reported to you, might of all others, have been well prepared to admit the truth of that doctrine by which it is affirmed, that under a certain influence the current of right feeling may flow smoothly and spontaneously through the heart ; while, if that influence be withdrawn and the heart be abandoned in consequence to itself, it may evince, by the abundant product of its own natural atrocities, how deceitful it is above all things, and how desperately wicked.

A very conspicuous instance of the same thing is the susceptibility of the heart to the power of music. You have seen how the song that breathed through every line of it the ardour of disinterested friendship, and a generous contempt for all selfishness—you have seen how it blended into one tide of emotion the approving sympathies of a whole circle of companionship. One would think, on looking along this festive board, that, with the harmony of sounds, there was a harmony of kindness and confidence and mutual good-will in every bosom ; and that each, awakened as it were to a fresh moral existence, had been suddenly formed as by enchantment into one devoted phalanx of sworn and trusty brotherhood. It is hard to imagine that on the morrow the competitions and the concealments and the jealousies of rival interest will be as busily active as before, and will obliterate every trace of the present enthusiasm. And yet there is in it no hypocrisy whatever. It is not a thing of artifice, but a thing that genuinely and honestly hath come out of the living excitement that is now in operation. The heart is actually attuned to the very cordiality which the music has inspired ; and while the notes still vibrate on the ear, the play of high and honourable feelings is upheld in the bosom—till the last echoes have died away from the remembrance, and the man again lapses into the same cold and creeping and selfish creature that he ever was.

But the finest recorded example of this fascination is that of the harp of David on the dark and turbulent spirit of Saul ; nor

was there ever a more striking exhibition of the power of melody than when the native outrageousness of this monarch's temper was thereby overborne. During the performance of the son of Jesse all the internal fires and furies by which his bosom was agitated seem to have been lulled into peacefulness. The tyrant was disarmed; and as if the cunningly-played instrument had conveyed of its own sweetness into his heart, he became meek and manageable as a child. We are glad that out of Scripture history we can draw such a case of illustration; and we now proceed to unfold the uses of it, in the argument that lies before us.

First, then, it is said of Saul that he was refreshed and became well under the operation of this music. In which case it was his duty to recur to it in every hour of necessity; to call in the harp on the very first approaches of the threatening visitation upon his spirit; and if he could not, in the native gentleness of his own heart, maintain a serenity of feeling and conduct to all around him, it was his business ever and anon to ply that artificial expedient by which alone it seems that the perennial kindness and tranquillity of his feelings could at all be upholden.

And secondly, you may further conceive of Saul that he succeeded in this great moral achievement upon his own spirit—that, on the strength of the foreign application ever at hand and never neglected by him, he actually won the conquest over the rebellious tendencies of his inner man, and steadily maintained it; and as the effect of this habitual recurrence to the soothing air by which all the tumults of his soul were pacified, that there was benevolence in every look, and such a placid softening of tone and manner, as made all his domestics happy, and him beloved by them all.

Now, thirdly, I would have you all to consider how Saul should have felt as well as acted, under the consciousness of what he natively and originally was. He in very deed, and because of the power that lay in the musical instrument, may have both imported into his own heart all the feelings, and diffused among those around him all the fruits of that benignity which had thus been awakened. But although he should in this way perpetuate the mastery of a good and gracious principle in his soul—should he not still have been base in his own eyes, when he bethought him of the quarter from which it behoved to come!—that to sustain his moral being he had to live on supplies from abroad, because in himself there was the foul spirit of a maniac and a murderer; and it would have become this

very monarch, even at the time when he most felt the play of kindness in his own heart, and when he most brightened the hearts of others, by the courtesy and the condescension that he shed over them—even then was it most his part to mourn the delinquencies of his inner man, and to loathe in dust and in ashes the savage propensities which would fain tumultuate there.

But lastly, do you not perceive, that in this state of matters there were really no mystery at all, though the actual serenity of Saul's temper and his own self-abhorrence because of its native fierceness and asperity had kept pace the one with the other; and that in the very proportion of that fearfulness and aversion wherewith he looked to himself, because of his inherent vices, would he become fruitful in all the virtues that were opposed to them? It were just the humility of his downward regards upon his own soul that would be the instrument of raising it to the highest perfection of which it was capable; and because he had no trust in the unborrowed energies within, that he would fetch aliment from without, for the preservation and the growth of all those moralities whereof he was most destitute. The harp would be his perpetual companion, or never beyond the reach of his calling for it. That sense of depravity which prompted the self-abasement of his spirit would prompt an unceasing recurrence to that by which its outbreakings were repressed; and so the more intense his detestation of his own character, the more active would be the vigour and efficacy of that alone practical expedient by which his character was converted and transformed.

And thus, in all its parts, does it hold of a Christian. He knows that in his own proper nature dwelleth no good thing. He is aware of his native ungodliness; and the experience of every day brings fresh and more humiliating discoveries of it to his conscience. He feels that in himself he is like Saul without the harp—not perhaps so violent and vindictive as *he* was among his fellows; but sharing with the whole human race in the virulence of their antipathies against a God of holiness. The streams of his disobedience may not be of the same tinge and impregnation as that of the Hebrew king; but they emanate like his from a temple of idolatry in the heart, that would constantly issue forth of its own produce on the outward history. The Christian feels that in that part of his constitution which is properly and inherently his own, there is a deeply-seated corruption, the sense of which never fails to abash and to humble him; and

thus, Christian though he be, he never ceases to exclaim—‘O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this law of sin, from this abiding and impetuous tendency to evil?’

What then, it may be asked, is it which serves to mark him as a Christian? Not, most assuredly, that he is free of a carnal nature tainted all over with foulest leprosy—but that he has access to an influence from without, by which a healing virtue is mingled with it, and all its rebellious tendencies overborne. The only distinction between the disciple and the unbeliever is, that the one uses the harp, and the other has neither faith in its efficacy nor desire for the effect of its operation. The Christian hath learned whither to flee in every hour of temptation; and thus it is that a purifying influence descends upon his soul. It cometh not through the medium of the ear, and upon the vehicle of sound; but it cometh through the medium of the understanding, and upon the vehicle of thought. It is not by calling the music that he loves into his presence, but by calling the truth that he believes into his memory—it is thus that he harmonizes the else disorderly affections of his heart; and while he feels that all within is corruption, he at the same time knows of an agency without by which the mutiny of its sinful appetites is stayed.

There was a personal agent called in by Saul, when he had to be calmed out of his wild perturbations—even the son of Jesse; and this he did by evolving a certain harmony of sounds on the ear of the Jewish monarch. And so He is a living and a personal agent who overrules the sinful and the wayward propensities of a believer’s heart; but this He does by evolving certain truths on the believer’s understanding. In the former case, the power to soothe lay materially and directly in the music—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of hearing, there needed one to perform it. In the latter case, the power to sanctify lies materially and directly in the doctrine—though, to bring it into contact with the organ of mental perception, there needeth one to present it—even the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to bring all things to our remembrance. And so, my brethren, when assailed by temptation from without, or like to be overborne by the tyranny of your own evil inclinations, is it your part to summon gospel truth into the presence of your mind; and, depending on the Holy Ghost, to go forth and meet His manifestations, as He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto your soul; and—precious fruit of your believing

meditation on the realities of our most holy faith!—you will be sure to find, as you look forward with hope to that mercy which is unto eternal life, that the heart will be purified thereby. It will be kept in the love of God; and this will attune it out of all discord and disorder. But never, throughout the whole of this process, will it be led to count on the worth or the power of its own internal energies. The sense of its depravity will ever be present to the conscience; and, hanging on an influence that is foreign to itself, will it feel as helplessly dependent on a medicine from without, as did Saul when he summoned to his apartment that melody which charmed all the heat and vindictiveness of his spirit away from him. It is thus that the believer, while he looks upon himself as nothing, or rather loathes himself as a diseased sinner, is ever labouring to medicate his soul from those springs of moral and spiritual health which are without him and above him—looking to that outward mercy which has been provided for his worthlessness, and praying for that refreshment and revelation by the Holy Ghost which are so richly provided for all who ask in faith.

We think that there must be many here present who might be made to recognise, and we trust some who have actually proved in their own persons, the efficacy of this expedient—how the truths of the gospel can attemper the soul into a unison with its spirit; and more especially in that one truth which is the first that the apostle bids us keep at all times in our memory, even that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures—how in this precious saying, when reckoned upon as faithful and regarded as worthy of all acceptation, there is a power to still and overawe the heart out of its rebellious tendencies—So that when a trusted Saviour is present to the thoughts, the sin of our nature is by a moral necessity disarmed of its practical ascendancy over us. We trust that with some who hear us it has been found to hold experimentally—how a sense of the mercy of God in Christ annihilates the whole space of separation that there was between God and the soul, and so dissipates all its ungodliness—how, walking before Him in the light and peace of conscious forgiveness, the spirit of bondage has fled away, and there have come in its place the love and the trust and the joy of reconciled children—how, whenever he bethinks him of God having passed over the magnitude of his own provocations, he finds that achievement easy which to nature is difficult, of maintaining the gentleness of his spirit under the sorest provocations

of his fellow-men—how, in dwelling on the agony of that endurance that was laid upon Christ for sinners, he too can learn to suffer and to grow in all those graces which are best taught in the school of tribulation—how it is when beholding the cross of our atonement, that he is most solemnized into a reverence for the sacredness of the Godhead, and is most awed into a fearfulness of the sin that was expiated there; above all, when he looks onward to the glories of that inheritance which Christ hath purchased by His blood, and the gates of which He has unbarred for the welcome access of the guiltiest of us all—how it is that the powers of the coming world win the mastery in his spirit over the powers of the present one; that he sits loose to the vanities and the interests of a scene which passeth speedily away; and now feeling eternity to be his destined home, and the virtues of eternity to be his incumbent preparation, he holds a perpetual warfare with those passions that war against the soul, and bears on every footstep of his pilgrimage on earth the impress of that heaven for which he hopes, and of that holiness to which he is aspiring.

We would conclude these preliminary remarks with three distinct observations.

And *first*, it is hoped that some of you may be led to perceive from them—how it is that by means of a power external to the mind of man, yet brought from without to bear upon it, it may be so transformed as to become a new creature. If the eloquence of a Christian minister can for a time lift the soul, as it were, above itself—or if a pleasing and pathetic novelist can transport the imagination of his reader, and so assort his feeling as that, while the illusion lasts, he shall be refined and removed above the level of our ordinary world—or if poetry can bear him upward to a purer moral element than he can breathe among his fellow-mortals—or lastly, if music, which so charmed the spirit of the Hebrew king out of all its ferocity, is still found, so long as it plays upon the ear, to attune the heart to nobler and better feelings than those by which it is habitually occupied—shall we wonder, that upon faith realizing the promises and the prospects of the gospel, the heart shall be translated into a new state, when thus visited as it were by the sense and the impression of its new circumstances? What music can be sweeter to the soul than when peace is whispered to it from on high; or what lovelier vision can be offered to its contemplation, than that of heaven's Lord and of heaven's family; or what more

fitted to lay the coarse and boisterous agitations of a present world, than the light which has pierced across the grave and revealed the peaceful world that is beyond it? Simply grant that the veil has been lifted from the eyes of guilty man; and that he now sees what he never wont to see—the love of God in Christ Jesus, and the remission of sins, and an open path to the bliss of eternity, and the glories of a purchased inheritance there, and here all the graces of our required preparation—let him see that these, which before stood at an impracticable distance, are now brought nigh unto him and have become all his own—is it at all to be marvelled at, when the romance of music and eloquence and imagination and poetry, addressed to the heart of man, can so sublimiate its affections for a period above all the passions and vulgarities of familiar life—with this fact of the human constitution so plainly before our eyes—are we to listen with incredulity, if told, that when the truths of Christianity burst forth upon the believer in all the magnificence of their lofty bearing and in all the might of their now apprehended reality, they so refine his every affection and so elevate the whole tone of his character, that all old things are henceforth done away, and all things become new?

Now, *secondly*, it is the office of God's Spirit thus to picture forth to the eye of the believer these truths of the gospel, in all the reality and power of application which belong to them. It is He who takes of the things of Christ; and, showing them unto the soul, causes the imagery of faith to overbear the impressions of sight. And the man who is thus acted upon, looketh beyond what is seen and temporal to what is unseen and eternal. It is from a source which is out of himself that he fetches an influence which never fails to soothe and to sanctify the corrupt and distempered spirit; and, as it was the duty of Saul on the threatening of every dark visitation to require the music of that harp which he could at all times summon by the word of command into his presence, so it is the duty of every sinner in every time of need or of temptation, to invoke that Spirit, who never is withheld from the prayers of those who sincerely ask Him. When like to be assailed by the power of sin to an overthrow, this is the instrument of aid and of defence that will never fail you; and let the storms whether of the furious or of the wayward passions of our nature be what they may, this is the agent, at the bidding of whose still but omnipotent voice, an influence of peace and purity descendeth upon the heart, and it becometh a great calm.

But *lastly*, the way in which all this bears upon the passage before us, is by helping us to the determination of a controversy—whether the soliloquy whereof it consists be that of Paul in his own proper person, or of Paul in the person of an unconverted man? How, it may be thought, could this holy apostle take to himself the blame of so much vileness and exceeding turpitude as are made to characterize him who is supposed to utter this effusion? How could it be said of him who fought the good fight, that he was sold under sin; and that there dwelt no good thing in his flesh; and that there was a law in him which would have led him in captivity to the law of sin and death; and that, wretched under a mass of corruption from which he could not deliver himself, he had to cry out, under the extremity of anxious helplessness, lest it should have wholly overwhelmed him? Can all this be true of the man in whom Christianity beheld the very noblest of her specimens; who ere he died could claim the victory as his own; and who, to obtain it, was throughout the whole of his discipleship the most unwearied in vigilance and the most strenuous in warfare?

Yes, there was a fight, and it turned out to be ultimately a successful one. But who were the parties in it? They were the grace of God on the one hand, and on the other the inherent corruption of man; and the very reason why Paul plied so laboriously and at length prevailed with the former, was because he felt such loathing and such self-abomination for the latter. This is a mystery of the Christian life which the world apprehendeth not; nor are they able to discern why the same individual should become every day more profound in humility, and yet more graceful in positive holiness—why he should be ever mourning more heavily than before under a sense of his worthlessness, and that at the very time when the real worth of his character is maturing and building up unto eternity. It is not understood how the strugglings of the inner man bring every Christian who feels them into a more familiar acquaintance than before with the adverse elements in the conflict; and that as the spirit lusteth against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit, just in proportion to the felt preciousness of the one is the felt burden and odiousness of the other. It is because he loathes so much the earthliness of what is naturally and originally his own, that he longs so much for the visitation of a heavenly influence from above. The sense of poverty is the very impulse that sends him to the fountain of abundance; and the detestation he feels of the

sin that dwells in him, is the best guarantee that this sin shall not have the dominion over him. With these principles do we feel ourselves prepared for entering into more full elucidation of the passage before us; nor will you, I trust, be any more perplexed when you read of him who delighted in the law of God after the inward man, and who disallowed all that was evil, and who had the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him—how at the same time he mourned his vile body, and groaned being burdened under a sense of that sore moral leprosy by which it was pervaded. He had no confidence in himself; but he rejoiced in the Lord Jesus. He was in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; but when he was weak then was he strong—for when he spake of his infirmities, the power of Christ was made to rest upon him. “I will make my grace sufficient for thee. I will perfect my strength in thy weakness.”

LECTURES ON THE ROMANS.

LECTURE XLII.

ROMANS VII. 14, 15.

“ For we know that the law is spiritual ; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not : for what I would, that do I not ; but what I hate, that do I.”

THE first thing to be remarked here, is the transition which the apostle makes at this verse into another tense. It looks as if from the seventh verse to the fourteenth, he, using the past tense, had been describing the state of matters antecedent to his conversion, and showing what his case was under the law ; but that now, sliding into the use of the present tense, he is describing his experience as a believer ; and this is one argument for Paul speaking here in his own person, and not in that of an unregenerate man.

‘ The law is spiritual.’ It has authority over the desires of the inner man. It holds a sinful wish to be criminal, as well as a sinful performance. It finds matter for condemnation in the state of the will, as well as in the deeds of the outward history. It demands punishment, for example, not merely on the action by which I wrest another’s property, but on the affection by which I covet it. Paul once thought himself free of all offences in regard to a neighbour’s rights, because he had never put forth the hand of violence, or plied any device of fraudulency against them. But when he looked to the spiritual nature of the commandment, in that it interdicted him even from the longings of a secret appetite for that which was not rightfully his own—then, conscious that with all the abstinence of his outer man from the acts of dishonesty there was still a secret propensity in his heart towards the gains or the fruits, he felt himself, when standing at the bar of this purer and loftier jurisprudence, to be indeed a transgressor. And so, in the general, there may be no disobedience on the part of the outer man to any of God’s commandments ; and yet there may be all the while an utter distaste for them on the part of the inner man—and this is what

the law takes cognisance of in virtue of its spiritual character, and pronounces to be sinful. To do what is bidden with the hand, is not enough to satisfy such a law—if the struggling inclination of the heart be against it. And above all will it charge the deepest guilt on a man—because of his disaffection towards God—because of a love for the creature that has deposed from its rightful ascendancy over him the love of the Creator—because of that moral anarchy and misrule in the constitution of his spirit, whereby, with its relish for the gifts of Providence, it has a disrelish and disregard for the Giver of them; and because, while it may yield many compliances with the law of God at the impulse of dread or of danger or of habit, it yields not to God Himself the offering of a spontaneous devotion, the tribute of an intelligent or of a willing reverence.

Perhaps my best recommendation to you, for the purpose of acquiring a more thorough discernment of God's law in the spirituality of its character, is that you peruse with faithful application to your own heart the fifth chapter of Matthew, where, article by article, you have the comparison between a spiritual and what may be called a carnal commandment; and from which you will at once perceive how possible it is, that with a most rigid and undeviating faithfulness in regard to the latter there may be an utter deficiency from the former in all its requirements; and how truly the same individual may say of himself, that when in the flesh he—touching the righteousness that is of the law—was blameless; and yet, when advanced and elevated above this state, and now in the spirit, he may say, O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the law of sin in my members? You see how, in proportion to his high sense of the law, he may have a low sense of himself; and that just as one advances in the discernment of its purity, and in the delicacy of his recoil at the slightest deviations therefrom, which surely mark his progressive sanctification—the more readily will he break forth into exclamations of shame and self-abhorrence: or the loftier his positive ascent on the heights of sacredness, the more fearful will he be of all those drags and downward tendencies by which he still is encompassed; and which, if not felt to be most hazardous as well as most humbling, may not only cause to slip the footsteps of the heavenward traveller, but may precipitate him from the eminence that he has attained, into the lowest depths of wretched and hopeless apostasy. *

‘I am carnal.’ It is on the principles just now uttered, that Paul may have made this affirmation of himself. The same man who could say of all the good that was done—“Nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me”—surely this man, who thus knew what he should refer to God’s grace and what he should refer to his own separate and unaided self, might, even after this grace had become the habitual visitant or inmate of his heart, still look to his own soul; and conceiving of it as apart or disjoined from the fountain out of which he draws the supplies of its nourishment, might well say, ‘I am carnal.’ Suppose for a moment that the branch of a tree were endowed with a separate consciousness of its own—then, however lovely in blossom or richly laden with fruit, it may feel, of the whole efflorescence which adorns it, that it was both derived from and is upholden by the flow of a succulence from the stem; and it may know that if severed therefrom it would forthwith wither into decay, and that all the goodly honours wherewith it was invested would drop away from it. The twofold consciousness of what it would be in itself, and of what it is in the tree, might force the very utterance that was emitted by a Christian disciple when he said, “I am dead, nevertheless I live.” “Yet not I,” adds the apostle, “but Christ liveth in me.” I, apart from Him without whom I can do nothing—I, disjoined from the Saviour who compares Himself to a tree and us to the branches—I, who in Christ am a new creature—out of Christ am dead, and out of Him am carnal.

The Scripture phrase, “to be in the flesh,” when descriptive of character, is applied in sacred writ only to the unregenerate. “They who are in the flesh cannot please God.” “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” But the Scripture term ‘carnal’ is sometimes applied to a man after his conversion. A man when newly born again is a babe; yet to such did Paul apply this epithet—“I could not speak unto you as unto spiritual but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” Only think of a Christian as made up of two ingredients, the one consisting of all that he inherits by nature, the other consisting of all that is superinduced on him by grace. Think of his inward and experimental life as consisting of a struggle between these ingredients, in which the one does habitually and will at length

ultimately and completely prevail. But the wrong principle belonging properly and primitively to the man himself, and the right principle being derived from without through the channel of believing prayer, or the exercise of faith in Christ Jesus—how natural is it in these circumstances for every Christian to regard the one as the home article, and the other as a foreign article for which he stands indebted to a fountain that is abroad, and whereunto it is his business to resort perpetually. He is like Saul operated upon by the harp of the son of Jesse; and as the one might well have said, even in the kindest and gentlest mood to which the warblings of the instrument had brought him, I in myself am a firebrand of rage and vindictiveness—so the other, conscious that disjoined from the grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ he is an ungodly and an unheavenly creature, might as well say, In myself I am an alienated rebel—in myself I am altogether carnal.

Let me separate by ever so little from Christ, then is this corrupt nature ever in readiness to put forth its propensities; or even let me always abide in Him—let me in no one instance lose my hold of Him—conceive me to be placed on the very height of Christian perfection, and that just because I at all times am steadfastly and solidly established on the deepest basis of Christian dependence—yet still with the assurance in my mind, that should I let the dependence go, self would recover the ascendancy, and that the ascendancy of self would be the ascendancy of sin, it is not too strong an inference that self is carnal; or even that self is sold under sin, as being, apart from the Saviour, its helpless and irrecoverable slave. It is said of Ahab that there was none like unto him; for he did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. In him you have a character where corruption was the dominant and the entire and the unresisted principle of his constitution. He was the old man all over—who loved his state of captivity, instead of lamenting it; and of whom it never could be said that he felt the sin of his nature to be a burden, or that he longed to be delivered from it, or that he delighted in the law of God after the inner man, and sighed after the subjugation or rather the extirpation of every tumultuous and adverse element of evil that was in his outer man. His mind went wholly along with the wicked and wayward inclinations that nature had given him; and here lay the difference between him and Paul, that with the latter there was gotten up a new creature, all whose ener-

gies and desires were in a state of warfare with those of the old man; and in this passage we have the cries and the agonies of the battle, till it closes with the final shout of victory—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Still, viewing the old man as properly his own, and the new creature as a present or a production from above—well might the apostle say, not in the character of what he was by derivation from the Lord his sanctifier, but in the character of what he originally and essentially was in himself—I am carnal, and I am sold under sin.

Ver. 15.—To understand this verse, and to see that it is the utterance not of a wilful sinner but of an honest and aspiring disciple, remember that it is the soliloquy of one who had just recognised the spiritual character of the law of God, and who was exercising and judging and confessing himself according to the standard of that law. There is at least one moral property that must in the midst of all his recorded deficiencies be ascribed to him. He willed the conformity of himself to God's holy commandment. The prescription that lies upon him and upon all is, "Be ye perfect;" and if perfection was not his achievement, it was at least his aim. His prevailing wish was to be altogether as he ought; and if he did not succeed in being so, he at least aspired at being so. The habitual longing of his heart was without reserve and without hypocrisy towards the law of God. There was a pure and a lofty ambition which actuated his soul; and the object of that ambition was that he might serve God without a flaw, and reach an unspotted holiness. He may have been thwarted in the ambition—he may have been so crossed and impeded in his movements as to have come greatly short of it—yet still the ambition did exist, and evinced at once its strength and its perpetuity, both by the bitterness wherewith he mourned over his own failures, and by the fresh and repeated efforts wherewith he laboured to redeem them. In a word, there was one principle of this man's constitution that was all active and awake on the side of holiness—that bore a genuine love to virtue, and made constant efforts to realize it—that could not rest while its own portrait was one of unfinished excellence; and like the accomplished artist, in proportion to his nice and delicate sense of beauty, so were his grief and his intolerance at the blemishes wherewith his performance was stained. It is he who sets before him the loftiest standard of worth, and who is most jealous and unremitting in

the pains that he takes to equalize it; it is he who most droops and is dejected under a sense of his deficiency therefrom. It is from him that we may look for most frequent humblings of spirit, and for the deepest visitations upon his heart of a sense of sin and of shortcoming; and that not because he is beneath other men in his powers of execution, but because he is beyond them in his powers of conception, and in the largeness of his desires after the supremacy of all grace and all goodness.

That the soliloquist of the passage had this generous and aspiring tendency is evident. If faults he had, he had no toleration for them, but rather the fellest antipathy—"That which I do I allow not; what I hate that do I." If he fell short of moral and spiritual greatness, still he honestly aspired and habitually pressed towards it. "What I would that I do not," and "to will is present with me," and "I would do good," and good is the law which has the consent of my approbation, and "in this law I delight after the inward man"—so that "with my mind I serve" it. Now could you apply any one of these affirmations to such a man as Ahab? If they hold true of one character and do not hold true of another, is there not the utmost of a real and practical difference between the characters? Could Ahab have said—It is no more I who do it, but sin that dwelleth in me? Does it not impress you with a most wide and palpable distinction, when you see one man solacing himself in full complacency with a sinful indulgence, and another man struggling with all his might against the sinful tendency which leads to it? The former comes willingly under the power of sin in his constitution—the other detests and mourns over the presence of it there. They are both of them alike in having a corrupt nature. They are unlike, in that one has been furnished with a new and holy nature, which does not immediately extinguish the former, but takes place beside it until death, and bears a principle of unsparing and unquenchable hostility towards it. A man conscious to himself of this state of composition, takes the side of his new nature, and can say of the rebellious movements of the old man, "It is not I who do them, but sin that dwelleth in me." Ahab could not have said so, but Paul could. In the former, sin and self were on terms of perfect agreement—so that his heart was fully set in him to do that which was evil. In the latter, the original self was set aside, and kept under, and loathed because of its abominations, and striven against as the worst of enemies, and loaded with epithets of

abuse, and charged with the designs and the dispositions of perpetual mischief. And so, throughout the whole of this soliloquy, is it reproached with being carnal and sold under sin, with doing that which is unallowable and undesirable and evil and hateful—with omitting to do what is good, and being without the skill and the power to perform it—with being utterly destitute of any good thing—with keeping up its execrated residence, even in the bosom of the Christian who loathed it; and, ever present there, warring against the suggestions of a better principle; and bent on taking captive the whole man to the law of that sin which was in his members—so as that the flesh was wholly enlisted on the side of this hateful service, and such a conflict upheld among the belligerent powers and principles that were in a believer's frame, as burdened him with a sense of wretchedness, and made him cry out for deliverance therefrom.

Take this along with you, and you will be able to appreciate what the confessions are that Paul makes of his own sinfulness. He first mourns over the guilt of his omissions, 'what I would that I do not'—'how to perform that which is good I find not'—'the good that I would I do not.' Ere you estimate the flagrancy of his omissions, think of this, that they consist in having fallen short of his desires—not that his work fell short of that of other men, but that it fell greatly short of his own willingness—not that he neglected any one duty which could obtain for him credit in society, but that he failed in bringing his graces and his exercises up to the balance of the sanctuary. That he should in any one instance through the day, have lost the frame of his affectionate dependence towards God, or have let a sense of his obligations to Christ depart from his mind, or have slackened his diligence in the way of labouring for the souls of his fellow-creatures, or have cooled in his charity towards those who were around him, or have failed in any acts and expressions of courteousness—these were enough most tenderly to affect such a heart of moral tenderness as he had, and to prompt every confession and every utterance of shame or humiliation or remorse that is here recorded. What some might mistake as the evidence of a spiritual decline on the part of the apostle, was in fact the evidence of his growth. It is the effusion of a more quick and cultured sensibility than fell to the lot of ordinary men, and is like the mortification of one, who, because the most consummate of all artists, is therefore the most feelingly alive to every deformity and every deviation. The

inference were altogether erroneous, that because Paul went beyond other men in his confessions, he therefore went beyond them in his crimes. The point in which he went beyond them was, not in crime, but in conscience; and the conclusion is—not that he who uttered these things was a reprobate, against whom the world could allege some monstrous or unnatural defect from any of the social or relative proprieties of life—but that, on the contrary, he was a busy and earnest and progressive disciple of the Lord Jesus, urged on by a sense of his distance from the perfection that lay before him, and charging his own heart with a wide and woful defect from the sanctities that it felt to be due to his God.

And the same holds true in regard to his confessions of positive sinfulness. ‘What I hate that I do.’ ‘I do that which I would not.’ ‘The evil which I would not that I do’—not that any doings of his were such as would be hateful to him of an ordinary conscience, not that the world could detect in them a flaw of odiousness. It was at the tribunal of his own conscience that they were deemed to be reprehensible. It was in the eye of one now enlightened in the law of God and made alive to it, that the sins of his own heart bore upon them an aspect of such exceeding sinfulness. It was because of that quicker sensibility that he now had, as he moved forward in his spiritual education, that he now felt more of tenderness and alarm about the secret workings of pride and selfishness and anger and carnality in his inner man; and such an effusion as that before us, which has been so strangely ascribed to a personified outcast from all grace and from all godliness, is one that only could have proceeded from the mouth of an experienced Christian, and is the best evidence of his progress. No unchristianized man could have felt that delight in God’s law, and that love for its precepts, and that active zeal on the side of obedience, which are all professed in the soliloquy that is now under consideration; and they would insure, as they do with every Christian, a real and habitual progress in the virtues and accomplishments of the new creature. But just in proportion as the desire after spiritual excellence is nourished into greater force and intensity in the one department of his now complex nature, so must be the detestation that is felt for every degree or remainder of evil that exists in the other department of it. And not till the union of the two is terminated by death—not till that tabernacle is broken up which festers throughout with the moral virus that

entered with the sin of our first parent, and was transmitted to all his posterity—not till these bodies have mouldered in the grave, and are raised anew in incorruption and in honour—not till then shall the desire and the doing, the principle and the performance, be fully adequate the one unto the other; and then, emancipated from the drag and the oppression that here encumber us, shall we be translated into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

LECTURE XLIII.

ROMANS VII. 16, 17.

"If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."

It might save a world of illustration in the business of interpreting this passage, were we sure of addressing ourselves to the experience of all our hearers. But we fear of some of you, that you have no internal conflict in the work of your sanctification at all—that you are under the dominion of but one ruler, even of self, that ever lends a willing ear, and yields a ready obedience to its own humours and appetites and interests; and that, living just as you list, you feel no struggle between your principles and your propensities—even because you live without God in the world. And furthermore we fear of others of you, that you have taken up your rest among the forms of an external religion, or among the terms of an inert orthodoxy, which play around the ear, without having reached a practical impulse to the heart; and which lead you to solace yourselves with the privileges of an imaginary belief, instead of landing you in the prosecution of a real and ever-doing business—which is to cleanse yourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, and to perfect your holiness in the fear of God. It is only the man who has embarked upon this work in good earnest—it is only he whose conscience will thoroughly respond to the narrative which the apostle here gives, of the broils and the tumults that take place among the adverse powers which are in the bosom of every true Christian. For Christian though he be, he is not yet a just man made perfect, but a just man fighting his way onward unto perfection, through the downward tendencies of a corruption that is present with him, and cleaves to him even till death shall set him free. And again, a fallen and depraved mortal though he be, he is not now of the wholly carnal and corrupt nature that he once was; but a spirit has been infused into him, wherewith to make head against his rebellious affections which still con-

tinue to solicit—though not permitted to seduce him—to that degrading slavery against which he has now entered into a war of resistance that will at length conduct him to freedom and to victory. The passage now before us is taken up with the history of this war. It is a narrative of that battle which arises from the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh—a process of unintelligible mystery, we doubt not, to those who have not personally shared in it, but coming intimately home to the experience of those who have learned to strive and to run and to endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

Yet, as we have said before, it were well if by any means we could give a plausible though distant conception to those who are without, of a matter wherewith every established and well exercised Christian is quite familiar. It looks, I have no doubt, an apparent puzzle to the understandings of many, that a man should do what is wrong while he wills what is right; and more especially, that he all the while should be honestly grieving because of the one, and as honestly aspiring and pressing forwards—nay, making real practical advances—in the direction of the other. And yet you can surely figure to yourself the artist, who, whether in painting or in poetry or in music, labours, yet labours in vain, to do full justice to that model of high excellence which his imagination dwells upon. He does not the things that he would, and he does the things that he would not. There is a lofty standard to which he is constantly aspiring and even constantly approximating—yet along the whole of this path of genius there is a perpetual sense of failure, and a humbling comparison of what has been already attained with what is yet seen in the distance before it, and a vivid acknowledgment of the great deficiency that there is between the execution of the hand, and those unreached creations of the fancy that are still floating in the head: and thus an agony and a disappointment and a self-reproval, because of indolence and carelessness and aversion to the fatigues of watchful and intense study, all mixed up—you will observe—with a towering ambition, nay, with a rapid and successful march along this walk of scholarship. How often may it be said of him that he does the things which he would not, when one slovenly line or one careless touch of the pencil has escaped from him, and when he falls short of those pains and that sustained labour, by which he hopes to rear a work for immortality. Yet is he making steady

and sensible advances all the while. This lofty esteem of all that is great and gigantic in art is the very step in his mind to a lowly estimation of all that he has yet done for it ; and both these together are the urgent forces by which he is carried upwards to a station among the men of renown and admirable genius who have gone before him. Now what is true of the scholarship of art is just as true of the scholarship of religion. There is a model of unattained perfection in the eye of its faithful devotees, even the pure and right and absolutely beautiful and holy law of God ; and this they constantly labour to realize in their lives, and so to build up, each in his own person, a befitting inhabitant for the realms of eternity. But while they love this law, they are loaded with a weight of indolence and carnality and earthly affections which cumber their ascent thitherward ; and just in proportion to the delight which they take in the contemplation of its heaven-born excellence, are the despondency and the shame wherewith they regard their own mean and meagre imitations of it. Yet who does not see, that out of the believer's will pitching so high, and the believer's work lagging so miserably after it, there cometh that very activity which guides and guarantees his progress towards Zion—that therefore it is that he is led to ply with greater diligence the armour which at length wins him the victory—that the babe in Christ is cradled, as it were, in the agitation of these warring elements—that his spiritual ambition is just the more whetted and fostered into strength by the obstacles through which it has to fight its way—and rising from every fall with a fresh onset of help from the sanctuary, does he proceed from step to step, till he have finished the faith, till he have reached the prize of his high calling.

Paul, ere he was a Christian, was blameless in the whole righteousness of the law—so far as he then knew or then understood its requirements. His conduct was up to the level of his conscience ; and what he did was adequate to the sense that was in him of what he ought to do. But on his becoming a Christian he got a spiritual insight of the holy law of God, and then began the warfare of the text—for then it was that his conscience outran his conduct ; and that he could not overtake by his doings what his now enlightened morality told him were his duties. There was nothing in this change actually to degrade the life and character of Paul ; but there was much in it to degrade them in his own eyes. He formerly walked on what

he felt to be an even platform of righteousness; but now the platform was as if lifted above him, and he was left to toil his upward way on a steep ascent that had been raised for conducting him thereto. Then all he did was as he would; and the work and the will were on terms of even fellowship with each other. But what he now did was as he would not; for he was aiming and stretching toward a height that he had not gained, and till he arrived at which he could not be satisfied. The view that he had now gotten of the law did not make him shorter of it than before; but it made him feel that he was shorter. He was still the same blameless and respectable man of society that he had ever been; nor do we think that even in his days of darkness any deed of intemperance or profligacy or fraud could at all be imputed to him. The confessions which are recorded here are not those of a degraded criminal, but those of a struggling and heavenly-minded Christian, who was now forcing his way among the sins and the sanctities of the inner man, and far above the level of our ordinary world, was soaring amid the spiritual alternations of cloud and of sunshine up to the heights of angelic sacredness.

Figure then a man to be under the aspirings of such a will on the one hand, but these often deadened and brought down by the weight of a perverse constitutional bias upon the other; and there are a thousand ways in which he is exposed to the doing of that which he would not. Should he wander in prayer—should the crosses of this world ever cast him down from the buoyance of his confidence in God—should he, on being overtaken with a fault, detect upon his spirit a keener edge of sensibility to the disgrace that he had incurred among his fellows upon earth than to the rebuke that he has brought upon Himself from the Lawgiver in heaven—should the provocations of dishonesty, or the hostile devices of malicious and successful cunning, or the unexpected evolutions of ingratitude, or even the teasing and troublesome annoyances of interruption—should any of these temptations, wherewith society is constantly exercising its own members, ever transport him away from meekness and patience and charity and unwearied kindness—then on that high walk of principle upon which he is labouring to uphold himself will he have to mourn that he doeth the things which he would not; and ever as he proceeds will he still find that there are conquests and achievements of greater difficulty in reserve for him. It argues a very exalted Christianity when the

glory of God is the habitual and paramount impulse that gives movement to the footsteps of our history in the world. But think you that when a man's heart comes to be visited by this ambition, then it is that he makes his escape from the complaint of doing what he would not? It only thickens the contest, and multiplies the chances of mortification, and furnishes new topics of humility to the disciple—and in the very proportion too that he urges and ascends and strikes loftier aims along the course of his progressive holiness. And so it follows that he who is highest in acquirement is sure to be deepest in lowly and contrite tenderness—for just as the desires of his spirit mount higher will the damp and the deadness and the obstructions of the flesh be more felt as a grief and an incumbrance to him. So that while in the body this soliloquy of the apostle will be all his own; and so far from conceiving of it as the appropriate utterance for a natural and unconverted man, it is just as we are the more saintly that we shall feel our readiness to coalesce with it as the fittest vehicle of hearts smitten with the love of purest excellence, yet burdened under a sense of distance and deficiency therefrom. And thus it is that the toilworn veteran has been known to weep upon his deathbed, and to long for an escape from this sore conflict between the elements of his compound nature, and to be in exceeding weariness for his emancipation from that vile body which brings a soil and a taint and a tarnish upon all his offerings, and to feel how greatly better it were that he should be with Christ, and expatiate at large among those unclouded eminences where the spirits of the perfect dwell, and be admitted among the glories of that unspotted holiness which now is inaccessible. For here the accursed nature is still present, and galls with its offensive solicitations the regenerated spirit—so that when weighed down by indolence, or frozen into apathy, or betrayed into uncharitable thoughts and uncharitable wishes, or led to seek the desires of its own selfishness more than God's honour, to rejoice in its exemption from punishment more than to aspire after its exemption from sin, to be more vehement for the object of being safe than for the object of being sanctified—The consciousness of these, which give no disturbance either to the unchristian man or to the Christian in his infancy, is still in reserve to humble and keep down even the most accomplished believer; to assure him still of the many things that he does which he would not; to keep him at the post of dependence, where he may join with the apostle in mourning over

his own wretchedness, and with the psalmist in exclaiming—“Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults: Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

In the case of an unconverted man, the flesh is weak and the spirit is *not* willing; and so there is no conflict—nothing that can force those outcries of shame and remorse and bitter lamentation, which we have in the passage before us. With a Christian the flesh is weak too, but the spirit is willing; and under its influence there must, from the necessary connexion that there is between the human faculties—there must from the desires of his heart be such a plenteous efflux of doings upon his history, as shall make his life distinguishable in the world, and most distinguishable on the day of judgment, from the life of an unbeliever. But still his desires will outstrip his doings, and the will that he conceives shoot greatly ahead of the work that he performs; and thus will he not only leave undone much of what he would, but, even in the language of our present verse, do many things that he would not. But I call you particularly to notice that the will must be there—that he is not regenerated at all unless the will—honestly and genuinely and without the hypocrisy of all mental reservation—be there. If he have any interest in Christ, any part in the promises or the influences of His new economy, the inclination which prompts to a resolute and unsparing warfare with all iniquity must be there. The man who uses the degeneracy of his nature as a plea for sinful indulgence—the man who makes a cloak of his corruption wherewith to shelter its deceits and its deformities, instead of hating the spotted garment with his utmost soul and labouring to unwind himself from all its entanglements—the man who loves the play of orthodoxy in his head, and stickles for his own depravity as the most favourite of its articles, while he continues to cherish it in his heart or to roll it under his tongue as a sweet morsel—that man is going to the grave with a lie in his right hand; and the piercing eye of his Judge, who now discerns his latent worthlessness, will at length drag it forth to open day, and expose it to shame and to everlasting contempt. That the will be on the side of virtue is indispensable to Christian uprightness. Wanting this, you want the primary and essential element of regeneration—you are not born again—you shall not enter the kingdom of God.

God knows how to distinguish the man of Christian uprightness, even amid all his imperfections, from another, who, not very visibly dissimilar in outward history, is nevertheless destitute of an honest, habitual, and heart-felt desirousness after the doing of His will. Let me suppose two yoked and harnessed vehicles, both upon a road of ruggedness and difficulty, and where at last each is brought to a dead stand. They are alike in the one palpable circumstance of making no progress; and were this the only ground upon which a judgment could be formed, it might be concluded of the drivers that they were alike remiss, or of the animals under them that they were alike spiritless and indolent. And yet on a narrower comparison of the two, it may be observed from the loose traces of the one that all exertion had been given up—while with the other there is the full tension of a resolute and sustained energy, pressing at the instant against the obstructions of the road, and perhaps with the perseverance of a few minutes carrying it over them. Both for the time being are stationary; and yet the one is as distinct as possible from the other, in respect of the push and the struggle to get forward, and the forthputting of strenuous inclination on the part of all the living agents who are concerned. And so, my brethren, of the Christian course. It is not altogether by the sensible motion, nor yet altogether by the place of advancement at which you have arrived, that you are to estimate the genuineness of the Christian character. Man may not see all the springs and traces of this moral mechanism, but God sees them; and He knows whether all is slack and careless within you, or whether there be the full stretch of a single and honest determination on the side of obedience. Think not that He is in want of materials for judging and deciding upon this question. Think not that He, of whom it is said that He weigheth the spirits of all those whose ways are clean in their own eyes, and that He pondereth the hearts as well as the goings of His creatures, and that from His throne in heaven His eyes behold and His eyelids try the children of men—think not that He will lose His discernment of the inward principle, amid all the drags and corruptions and obstacles wherewith a believer is encompassed upon his path. He knoweth how to separate the chaff from the wheat, and how to set His appropriate mark on the upright and on the hypocrite. You know in what direction you should move, even towards that which is good and away from that which is evil. God

knows if you are intently and sincerely prosecuting this career ; for under all the mistiness of the human understanding, " nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his ; and, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

And so, amid all the besetting infirmities of a nature tainted with evil, which Paul had as well as others, he had what unconverted sinners have not, a desire and a conatus after all holy obedience. He consented unto the law that it was good—not assented but consented—did not simply approve of the things that are more excellent, as the Jews with whom he reasoned, but had a liking to the things that are more excellent. His will was on the side of the law that he loved, and not on the side of that transgression which he hated, at the very time perhaps that he had been surprised into it. He consented unto the law that it was good, and his delight was in the law after the inward man, and with his mind he served the law of God. And God has a judging and a discerning eye upon all these tendencies. He knows most clearly the difference between him who has them and him who has them not. There is a real and substantial distinction between the two characters, which is quite palpable to our heavenly Judge, and will guide Him to an unerring decision on the day of reckoning. If not so palpable to yourselves, it should just make you the more earnest in labouring to work out your assurance, and to watch against the deceitful and unknown hypocrisy that may be lurking under the plausibilities of an orthodox profession, and to be altogether on the alert and on the alarm against all those treacherous inclinations, which if not rooted out, must at least be most vigilantly guarded, and on every appearance which they do put forth must be vigorously overborne. The adherence of the mind must be to the law of God. The affectionate consent of the heart must be towards it. All the feelings and faculties of the inward man must be on the side of obedience ; and if such be indeed our spiritual mechanism, we shall be impelled forward, through the many impediments of a perverse and wofully deranged nature, on the path of new obedience—rising, as the upright ever do, from the falls which they experience ; and urging our laborious and oft interrupted way to that land where the soul that has holy desires shall meet with a body that has been delivered of its moral leprosy, we shall pass from strength to strength till we appear perfect before God in Zion.

Ver. 17.—There is a peculiarity here that is worth adverting to. St. Paul, throughout the whole of this passage, utters the consciousness that is in him of the two opposite principles which resided and which vied, the one with the other, for dominion over his now compound because now regenerated nature. And it is remarkable how he sometimes identifies himself with the first of these ingredients, and sometimes with the second of them. In speaking of the movements of the flesh, he sometimes says—It is I who put forth these movements. “I am carnal and sold under sin.” “I do that which I hate.” “I do that which I would not.” “In me, that is, in my flesh;” but still, you will perceive, so identifying for a time the flesh with himself as to say of this flesh that it is me—“In *me* dwelleth no good thing.” And lastly, “I do the evil that I would not,” and, “I find not how to perform that which is good.”

Now here you will perceive, that in all these quotations he charges on his own proper and personal self the corrupt feelings and instigations to which the flesh gives rise. And it is true that these all do emanate from the original part of his nature; and the other, or the gracious part of it, came to him by a subsequent accession. It is a thing superinduced at conversion, and may be regarded more in the light of an element imported from abroad, which no doubt it was his part to cherish to the uttermost, but which still was a sort of foreigner in his constitution, that did not primarily and essentially belong to it.

Yet notwithstanding this, I would have you to notice how he shifts the application of the pronoun *I*, and transfers it from the corrupt to the spiritual ingredient of his nature. It is I who would do that which is good. It is I who hate that which is evil. It is I who consent unto the law; and finally, it is I who delight in the law of God after the inner man. Thus it is, if I may so speak, that Paul interchanges himself between the two conflicting elements that were within him—at one time regarding the better of the two elements as a visitant from without whom he longed to detain, and charging upon his own person all the baseness and misery of its antagonist—at another bitterly complaining of the worse element as a burden wherefrom he longed to be delivered, and actually vindicating himself from its corrupt movements by expressly saying—It was not I. And to fetch an example from another part of his writings, we hold it to be truly remarkable, that while in the passage before us he says of that which is evil in him—“It is no more I that do it,

but sin that dwelleth in me"—there is a different passage where he says of that which is good in him, "nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me."

We thus bring together these affirmations of the apostle, hoping that it may have the effect of making more manifest to you, that state of composition in which every Christian is, who hath been visited with spiritual life from on high, and yet is compassed about with the infirmities of an earthly tabernacle. In virtue of the original ingredient of this composition, he does well to be humbled under a sense of his own innate and inherent worthlessness. And yet it is true, that in virtue of the second or posterior ingredient—his taste, and his understanding, and his deliberate choice, and the higher powers and faculties of his moral system, are now all on the side of new obedience. Nevertheless it is well for him to look often unto the rock whence he was hewn; and thinking of the quarter whence he derives all his heaven-born virtues, to say of them—They had not their origin in me: and it is also well for him, while he regards the duties of the Christian life and the graces of the Christian character, to say—These are what *I* love to perform, and these are what *I* hope to realize.

And the apostle, at the end of this chapter, lays before us the distinction between the two parts of the Christian nature, when he says—"With the mind I myself serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin." But ever remember, that it is the part of the former to keep the latter under the power of its presiding authority. The latter, on this side of death, is ever present with us; but for all that, it may not prevail over us. It may often be felt in its hateful instigations; but it must not on that account be followed in the waywardness of its devious and unlawful movements. Were there no counteracting force I would serve it; but with that force in operation over me and because I am under grace, sin may have a dwelling-place but it shall not have the dominion.

When the matter is taken up as a matter of humiliation, then it cannot be too strongly insisted upon, that it is I who am the sinner; that to myself, properly and primarily, belongeth all that is vile and worthless in my constitution; that, even at the very time I am brightening into the character of heaven, I am ever reminded by the conscience within me of an inherent depravity that is all my own; and that even though this corruption is fast dying towards its final and complete disappearance, yet

it is under the power of an influence that cometh all from another. He who can say—"By the grace of God I am what I am," may in fact have reached a lofty eminence of that ascent which reacheth unto perfection; and yet with truth may think and feel, that in himself he is altogether void of godliness. The shame of his original nature still adheres to him; and although it be fast giving way to the ascendant power of another and a nobler nature, yet, knowing whence it is that he hath derived both its being and its growth, the graces and the ornaments of the spiritual life are but to him a matter of gratitude, and not at all of glory.

On the other hand, when, instead of being taken up as a topic of humiliation it is taken up as a topic of aspiring earnestness, it cannot be too strongly urged on every Christian, that he should be able honestly and heartily to say of himself, I desire after holiness—in very sincerity and truth it is the fondest aim of my existence, to be what I ought, and to do what I ought—for the furtherance of the same would I pray and watch and keep my unceasing post both of vigilance and exertion—I take the side of all that is good and gracious in my constitution, and against whatever still adheres to me of the unrenewed and the carnal, do I feel an utter and irreconcilable enmity. His mind is with the law of God; and though the tendencies of his flesh be with the law of sin, yet, sustained by aid from the sanctuary, does he both will and is enabled to strive against these tendencies and to overcome them.

It is under such a feeling of what he was in himself on the one hand, and such an earnestness to be released from the miseries of this his natural condition upon the other, that Paul cries out in the agonies of his internal conflict—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And I would have you to mark how instantaneous the transition is, from the cry of distress to the gratitude of his felt and immediate deliverance—"I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." This we hold to be the exercise of every true Christian in the world. Evil is present with him; and he blames none but himself for its hateful and degrading instigations. But grace is in readiness, not to sweep away this evil as to its existence, but to subdue it as to its prevalency and power; and while he blames none but himself for all that is corrupt, he thanks none but God in Christ for all that is gracious and good in him. To use an old but expressive phrase, his soul

is ever travelling between his own emptiness and Christ's fullness; and like the apostle before him, when urged with any temptation, he recurs to the expedient of beseeching the Lord earnestly that it might depart from him. And the answer to this petition is remarkable. It does not appear that the temptation was made to depart from him, but it was deprived of its wonted force of ascendancy over him. It was not by the extirpation of the evil, but by the counteracting strength of an opposite good that the apostle was kept upright as to his walk in the midst of all the adverse and corrupt tendencies of his will. "I will make my grace sufficient for thee," was the Lord's answer to him. It was not that he did not still feel how in himself he was weak. The weakness of nature remained; but "in that weakness I will perfect my strength," says the Saviour. And so it is, we believe, to the end of our days. There is a felt distinction between the weakness that is in ourselves and the strength that cometh upon us from the upper sanctuary. Even Paul was doomed to the consciousness that he had both a flesh and a mind—the one of which would have inclined him wholly to the love and to the law of sin; and with the other of which he kept the corrupt tendency that still abode with him in check, and so maintained a conduct agreeable to the law of God. Like him, my brethren, let us have no confidence in the flesh, and like him let us rejoice in the Lord Jesus; and so shall we be enabled to serve God in the spirit—realizing that comprehensive description which he gives of a Christian when he says—"We are of the circumcision, who serve God in the spirit, and rejoice in the Lord Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

LECTURE XLIV.

ROMANS VIII. 1.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

THE term ‘now’ may be understood in two senses—one of them a more general, and the other a more special. It may be understood as it respects the present economy of the gospel. Now, since that economy has been instituted—now, since the first covenant has passed away, and the second has been substituted in its place—now, that Christ hath borne the vengeance of the law upon His own person, and, having thus disposed of its threatenings against the guilty, can address the guilty with the overtures of a free pardon and a finished and entire reconciliation—now is it competent for sinners to embrace these overtures; and there is no condemnation to those who, having so complied with them, are in Christ Jesus. It is thus that the term *now* may be made to respect the current period in the history of God’s administration—the reign of grace under which we at present are, in contradistinction to the former regimen of the law which has been superseded.

Or it may be understood more specially, as referring to the present moment in the history of an individual believer. He is now freed from condemnation—not as if the sentence of acquittal were still in dependence, but as if that sentence had already passed—not as if he had to look, perhaps doubtfully and ambiguously, forward to some future day when a verdict of exculpation shall be pronounced upon him; but as if he stood exculpated before God even now, and even now might rejoice in the forgiveness of all his trespasses.

We think that, in the clause before us, the term *now* reaches the full extent of this signification. When a sinner closes with Christ, God takes him on the instant into reconciliation; and from that time are his sins washed out in the blood of the Lamb. I will remember them no more. I will make no more mention

of them ; and they are among the things that are behind, and which ought to be forgotten. The believer should feel his conscience to be relieved from the guilt and from the dread of them ; and, instead of being any longer burdened with them as so many debts subject to account and reckoning on some future day, he has a most legitimate warrant for looking on the account as closed, and believing that there is a full settlement and discharge because of them between him and God. We have heard that it is wrong in a believer to live beneath his privileges, and we fully agree in so thinking. We know not how the spirit of bondage is ever to be done away, or the joy of the gospel ever made to spring up in the heart, if, still beset with the entanglement of his scruples and of his fears, he shall suspend the remission of his sins on anything else than on the blood of Jesus. Now all that is told of that blood should assure him of a present justification ; and this should send an instant peace into his bosom ; and, like the jailer of old, should he on hearing of the power and property thereof, forthwith and from that moment rejoice. Be translated then into the sense of God being at peace with you. Receive the forgiveness of your sins through Him whom God hath set forth as a propitiation. Look unto Christ lifted up for the offences of the world ; and be encouraged in the thought, that the whole weight of your offences has indeed been borne away from yourself, and indeed been laid upon another. It is on the strength of this simple exhibition, that I should like to assure you of pardon ; nor would I embarrass the matter with any conditions, or hang it on any dark and uncertain futurities that may lie before you. Christ hath made atonement, and with it God is satisfied ; and if so, well may you be satisfied—delighting yourselves greatly in the abundance of peace, and going forth even now in the light and the liberty of your present enlargement.

But the verse further proceeds to inform us who they are that have this inestimable privilege ; and the first circumstance of description which it brings forward respecting them is, that they are in Christ. There are some who, actuated by the distaste of nature towards gospel truth in all its depth and all its peculiarity, understand this phrase in a way that is but vaguely and feebly expressive of its real meaning. They have no tolerance for the doctrine of a vital and mystical union between Christ as the head, and Christians as the members who receive from Him both their guidance and their nourishment ; and they

fear lest fanaticism should betray them into some of her illusions, by carrying too far the analogy between a vine and its branches; and so they get over the phrase of being in Christ, and get quit of all that special intimacy of alliance with the Saviour which it is fitted to convey, by the very general interpretation that to be in Christ is just tantamount to being a Christian. And so it is, if you understand a Christian in the full sense and significance of that high denomination. But then we must not shut our eyes against the closeness of that personal and substantial attachment, which we everywhere read of, as subsisting between the Redeemer and those who are the fruit of the travail of His own soul; nor are we jealously to exclude from our minds the impression of that very near relationship which is suggested by the following passages—"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;" "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;" "The dead in Christ shall rise first;" "We are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ;" "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;" "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit;" "And be found in him, not having my own righteousness."

But lest we should wander into a region of mist and of obscurity, let us not forget that for the purpose of being admitted into this state of community with the Saviour, the one distinct and intelligible thing which you have to do is to believe in Him. There is nothing mystical in the act by which you award to Him the credit for His declarations; and this is the act by which you are grafted in the Saviour. Whatever this matter of your union with Christ be, it all hinges upon your faith in Him—which faith is the great tie of relationship betwixt you. As you hold fast the beginning of your confidence and persevere therein, the tie will be strengthened—the relationship will become more intimate—the communications of mutual regard will become more frequent and more familiar to your experience—every day you live might bring you into more intense acquaintanceship with the Saviour, and that on the strength of your faithful applications to Him, and of His sure and faithful responses unto you; and thus, by certain exercises and feelings which certainly are not recondite in themselves might you arrive at a state of fellowship with Christ; which fellowship, in the description of it, might be very recondite both

to those who stand without, and even to those who have got no farther than to the threshold of Christian experience. By the simple expedients of believing prayer, and the habitual commitment of yourself to the Lord your Saviour in circumstances of trial or difficulty, and the encouragement of your heart's regard and gratitude because of all the favours that you have gotten at His hand, and the strenuous maintenance within you of that peace which He hath purchased by His blood, and of that purity by which His will is complied with and His doctrine is adorned—by these you may so overshoot the experience of other men, as to have attained a sense and a discernment of incorporation with the Saviour wherewith they are not yet prepared to sympathize. All this, though not yet realized by many of you, is surely conceivable by many of you; but meanwhile, and lest you should think of some remote and inaccessible mystery which it were utterly hopeless for you to aspire after, I would have you all to remark, that though the territory of Christian experience may not be plain to you, yet the way is plain by which you arrive at it—that, more particularly, you are conducted to the state of being in Christ simply by believing in Him: and so, there ought to be nothing more unintelligible in the verse, that 'there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,' than in the verse,—“He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”

But there is another circumstance of description that attaches to those unto whom there is no condemnation. This is the privilege of those who are in Christ Jesus; and farther, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Now here I must come forth with a special demand upon your attention. We are not fond of those less manageable topics in theology that call either for an elaborate exposition on the part of the minister, or for a very strenuous and sustained effort of attention on the part of the hearers; and nothing else can reconcile us to them than their practical bearing upon the comfort or the holiness of Christians. For it is most true, that a thing may at once be both profound and important. It may lie deep; and yet, like the precious metals, be of use in the familiar currency of the business of religion. The work of godliness presses all the faculties into its service, and lays a tax on the understanding of man, as well as upon his heart and his conscience; in-

somuch that we are bidden to give earnest heed, and to hearken diligently, and to search for sacred wisdom as for hidden treasure, and to meditate on these things, and to give ourselves wholly thereunto, and to study and strive and stir ourselves up that we may lay hold of them. And we do think that such passages as these might mitigate somewhat the prejudice of many against the scholastic air of certain of our theological disquisitions—as leading us to suspect that perhaps in some instances, and more especially in the work of rightly dividing the word of truth, the thing is unavoidable.

You will therefore suffer me, I trust, when I say that of the two circumstances in the description of those who are free from condemnation which are presented to our notice in the verse before us, one of them is the cause of our being so freed; and the other is not the cause but the consequence. Both of these invariably meet in the person of him who hath been admitted to the pardon and acceptance of the gospel. Every one who is so admitted is in Christ Jesus; and every one who is so admitted walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit. But it is of real practical importance for you to be made aware, that one of these circumstances goes before your deliverance from guilt, and the other comes after it. Your release from condemnation is suspended on the first circumstance, of your being in Christ Jesus. But it is not so suspended on the second circumstance, of your walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit. The first is the origin of your justification—the second is the fruit of it. You secure your hold of the one by keeping hold of Christ; and you make progress in the other by walking securely before Him in the light of His friendly countenance, and with the willingness of a grateful and devoted heart which He has emancipated from all its fears. The order of succession which I now announce to you will not interest those who take no interest in their souls; but it may resolve the difficulty of an anxious inquirer, and be the instrument to him both of his translation into peace and of his translation into progressive holiness.

For mark the embarrassment of that disciple, who instead of entering upon forgiveness even now by a league of faith and fellowship with Christ, and so bringing his person under the first of these two circumstances, postpones his enjoyment of this privilege until he has accomplished the second of them, and is satisfied with himself that he walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Look, I pray you, to the heavy disadvantage

under which he toils and travails at the work of new obedience; and how the spirit of bondage is sure to be perpetuated within him, so long as he persists in his wrong imagination; and how the conditions of an impracticable law must still continue to oppress his conscience, and to goad him onward in a service where he labours in the very fire, and wearies himself for very vanity; and how working, as he in fact must do for his justification before God, he cannot advance a single footstep without a despairing eye on some new and unscaled heights of virtue, the very aspect of which takes all heart and all energy away from him. And thus, with the burden upon his inner man of all the fears and disquietudes which attach to the old legal economy, will he either spend his days in a grievous servitude which fatigues but never satisfies, or be driven from very weariness to a compromise between his conscience and his conduct, between the law of God and his own garbled conformity thereunto—bringing down the high requisitions of heaven to the corrupt standard of earth; and offering, in the sight of men and of angels, a polluted obedience as a rightful equivalent for the rewards and the honours of eternity. He must either do this, or be haunted and pursued to the end of life by all the perplexities of a yet unsettled question between him and God; and the sense of his manifold deficiencies will never cease either to pain or to paralyse him; and still much of the drudgery of obedience may reluctantly be borne, but nought of the delight of obedience will be there—there may be the outward compliance of a slave, but none of the inward graces or aspirations of a saint. The truth is, that if this immunity from condemnation, instead of being a thing given to us because we are in Christ, is a thing purchased by us because of our walking not after the flesh but after the Spirit—then will conscience ever be suggesting to us that the purchase has not been made good, and all the jealousies of a bargain will ever and anon rise up between the parties, and a cold or mercenary feeling will put to flight the good-will, and the confidence, and the spontaneous regard, which are the alone worth ingredients of all acceptable godliness; and after all the offerings that may have been rendered by the hand, the sterling tribute of the heart will be withholden. God will be feared, or He will be distrusted; but He cannot be loved under such an economy; so that, throughout the whole of this strenuous and sustained exertion after a righteousness which is by the law, the law is dishonoured at every breath in the first and greatest of her commandments.

There is a better way of ordering this matter; and it is a way laid down by Him who is the wisdom of God unto salvation. The gospel carries in it a full and immediate tender of pardon unto sinners. Deliverance from condemnation is not the goal, but the starting-post of the Christian race; and instead of labouring to make good the remote and inaccessible station where forgiveness shall be awarded to him, he is sent forth with the inspiration of one who knows himself forgiven on the way of all the commandments. All are invited to come unto Christ, and to be in Christ; and from that moment the believer's guilt is washed away, and a full deed of amnesty is put into his hand, and lightened of all his fears, he goes forth upon his course rejoicing. The tenure of his discipleship is not that with him there is some future chance of pardon, but that now unto him there is no condemnation; and this, like the loosing of a bond, sets him free for all the services of new obedience. It opens an ingress to his heart for affections which never else could have found company there, and the creature knowing himself to be safe, and delivered from the engrossment of his before slavish apprehensions, can now with new-born liberty walk after the Spirit on the path of a progressive holiness. It is because he knows the truth that the truth has now made him free. It is not a regeneration originating with himself that has reconciled him unto God—but it is a sense of his reconciliation, it is this which has regenerated him. His new walk is not the cause of his agreement with God. It is the consequence which has emanated therefrom.

It is the free grace of the gospel which awakens every man who receives it to the charm of a new moral existence. Faith is the quickening touch whereby the before dormant energies of our nature are put into motion. It is faith which ushers love into the heart, and love gives impulse to the inert and sluggish mechanism of the human faculties. With the despairing sense in his bosom of a good wholly unattainable, the man feels himself weighed down to inaction and to apathy. But when the good is offered to him freely, and he by faith lays hold of it—then, delivered at once from the cold and creeping spirit of bondage, does he break forth in the full vigour of his emancipated powers. What before was a matter of anxious uncertainty, and without either hope or affection to animate, becomes a matter of confidence and alacrity and good-will. And this is the great secret of that promptitude and that power wherewith the gospel urges

on its disciples to the cultivation of its heaven-born virtues, to the faithfulness and the activity of its bidden services.

Make the transition, my brethren, from death unto life, by simply laying hold on the gospel offer of reconciliation. After placing your full reliance upon this, then run with all your might on that heavenward path of righteousness and purity and love which leadeth unto the upper paradise. First trust in the Lord, and then be doing good. To a workman a tool is indispensable; but you would never bid him work *for* the tool—you would put the tool into his hand and bid him work *by* it. Faith is the alone spiritual tool by which you can accomplish any right spiritual preparation. How can I love God—how can I maintain the gentleness of my spirit under provocations the most artful and the most galling—how can I keep up the serenity of the inner man while the voice of calumny is abroad, or a visible alienation sits upon every countenance, or plans mis-give and prospects lower and look dreary on every side of me—or, forsaken by all that is sweet and soothing in human companionship, I have nought to lean upon but God as the friend whom I have chosen, and heaven as the home of my fondest expectations? The answer of the New Testament is, ‘only believe—all things are possible to him that believeth.’ This is the tool for all the high moral achievements of Christianity; and thus it is that your being now in Christ, with a present freeness from condemnation, forms an essential stepping-stone to your walking no more after the flesh but after the Spirit.

But—mark it well, my brethren—this distinction between the consequence and the cause, though it gives to the obedience of a believer its proper place, does not make that obedience less sure. What the worldly or hypocritical professor thinks to be faith, is nought but fancy or something worse, if it be not followed by the walk of godliness. It is just as true as if your virtue were the price of your salvation, that there will be no salvation for you if you have no virtue. There will be a personal distinction between those in the last day who stand on the right, and those who stand on the left of the judgment-seat; and the distinction will be, that whereas the one abounded in good so the other abounded in evil deeds done in their body. All that we have said is not with a view to supersede the moralities of practical righteousness, but to set you on the proper way by which to arrive at them. The ultimate design of the gospel economy is to make those who sit under it zealous of

good works; and the reason why we should like the sense of your deliverance from guilt to be introduced even now by faith into your bosoms, is, that we esteem it the only instrument for reviving within you the love of God, or for causing to break forth upon your visible conduct the efflorescence of all that is virtuous and pure and praiseworthy.

To conclude my remarks upon this verse which has detained us so long, I would have you to be aware of this most important consideration—that the same believer who is represented here as walking not after the flesh, is the very individual who would take up the soliloquy of the last chapter, and have full share and full sympathy with the toil, and the conflict,* and all the inward bitterness because of sin, that are represented therein. The same man who feels the motions of the flesh, walks not after the flesh. The same man who is harassed with the instigations of sin, resists and refuses to follow them. He who was burdened, even to a sense of wretchedness, with the hateful presence of his wayward and licentious desires, would not submit to their tyranny; and while kept in a state of constant vigilance and alarm because of the warring elements in his bosom, yet does he so fight as that the evil which is in his heart shall not have the mastery over his conduct—so that, amid the opposing tendencies and inclinations which beset his will, still his walk is the walk of new obedience—not being after the flesh but after the Spirit. “Every man is tempted,” says the apostle James, “when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin, and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death.” The believer is often so tempted, and even to his own sad grief and humiliation may he have described the previous steps of this process; but never is the process so finished as to terminate in death. He struggles against sin, and he prevails over it. There may be a sore and a desperate contest in the inner man; but the result of it is a body kept under subjection, whose hands are made the instruments of righteousness, and whose feet are found in the way of all God’s commandments. Take, my brethren, the patent and accessible way that lies so openly and so invitingly before you. Wash out your sins even now in the blood of God’s everlasting covenant. Come and taste of the sure mercies of David. Receive the forgiveness of your sins; and when delivered from the weight and oppression of your guilt, that sore spiritual palsy, then arise and walk. Tidings of great joy should make you

joyful; and the tidings wherewith I am fraught are of that remission from sin which I now preach unto you, and which may be preached to every creature under heaven. The effect it had on believers of old was an instantaneous joy; and so should be the effect on all now who believe the same gospel. And joy, my brethren, carries a vigour and an inspiration along with it. There is a might of practical energy in the impulse which it communicates; and it is when the heart is enlarged thereby, that the feet run with alacrity in the way of all the commandments.

LECTURE XLV.

ROMANS VIII. 2.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”

It is of great importance for the understanding of this verse, that you be made acquainted with the two different senses that belong to the word ‘law.’ At one time it signifies an authoritative code, framed by a master for the regulation and obedience of those who are subject to him. And so we understand it when we speak of the law of God, whether by this we mean His universal moral law, or any system of local and temporary enactments—such as those which were embodied for the special government of the Jews, and have obtained the general denomination of the Mosaic law or the ceremonial law. According to this meaning of it, it stands related to jurisprudence—established by one party who have the right or the power of command, and submitted to by another party on whom lies the duty or the necessity of obedience. The laws of the Medes and Persians—the laws of any country—and, in a word, any rule put forth by authority and enforced by sanctions, whether it has issued from the Divine Governor, or from those who have the reins of civil or political authority upon earth—all are expressed by the same term and in the same sense of the term. But there is still another and very frequent meaning of this word, apart altogether from jurisprudence—a meaning applicable in cases where there is no obedience of living and accountable creatures at all; and a meaning in which it might be used and understood even by the Atheist, who denies the being or the power of a living Sovereign who presided over nature, and established the various successions that go on with such order and regularity around us. It is quite consistent with the use of language to speak of the laws of nature—denoting thereby the process by which events follow each other in a train of certain and unvarying accompaniment; such for example as the law of falling

bodies—the law of reflection from polished surfaces—the laws of the vegetable kingdom ; and even in this sense may we speak of the laws of the human mind, as altogether distinct from that law of God to which it is morally and rightfully subject in the way of jurisprudence. By one of these laws its thoughts follow each other in a certain order that might almost be predicted, so that if one thought be present to it, it is sure to suggest another thought—and this is called the law of association. And so in proportion as we make an intimate study of ourselves, shall we find certain methods of procedure in the order of which the feelings and the faculties and the habits of man are found to go forward ; and all these may be announced by metaphysicians and moralists as the laws of human nature. The law which willing and accountable creatures are bound to obey is one thing ; the law in virtue of which creatures whether animate or inanimate are found at all times to make the same exhibition in the same circumstances, is another.

At the same time, it is not difficult to perceive how one and the same term came to be applied to things so distinct in themselves ; for you will observe that law, according to the first sense of it, is not applicable to a single command that may have issued from me at one time, and perhaps may never be repeated. It is true that this one commandment, like all the others, is obeyed, because of that general law by which the servant is bound to fulfil the will of his master. Yet you would not say of the special commandment itself that it was a law ; nor does it attain the rank of such a denomination, unless the thing enjoined by it be a habit or a practice of invariable observation. Thus the order that the door of each apartment shall be shut in the act of leaving it, or that none of the family shall be missing after a particular hour in the evening, or that the Sabbath shall be spent by all the domestics either in church or in the exercises of household piety—these may be characterized as the laws of the family, not the random and fortuitous orders of the current day, but orders of standing force and obligation for all the days of the year ; and in virtue of which you may be sure to find the same uniform conduct on the part of those who are subject to the law, in the same certain circumstances that the law hath specified.

Now, it is this common circumstance of uniformity which hath so extended the application of the term law, as to present it to us in the second verse which I have endeavoured to explain. Should you drop a piece of heavy matter from your hand, nothing

more certain nor more constant than the descent which it will make to the ground, just as if constrained so to do by the authority of a universal enactment on the subject—and hence the law of gravitation. Or if space be allowed for its downward movement, nothing more certain or uniform than the way in which it quickens its descent, just as if bidden to make greater speed, and hence the law of acceleration in falling bodies. Or if light be made to fall by a certain path on a smooth and polished surface, nothing more mathematically sure than the path by which it will be given back again to the eye of him who looks to the image that has thus been formed—and hence in optics the law of reflection. Or if a substance float upon the water, nothing more rigidly and invariably accurate than that the quantity of fluid displaced is equal in weight to that of the body which is supported—and all this from a law in hydrostatics. Now there is a like constancy running throughout the whole of nature, and any of her uniform processes is referred to the operation of a law—just as if she sat with the authority of a mistress over her mute and unconscious subjects, and as if they by the regularity of their movements did willing and reverential homage to the authority of her regulations. But you will perceive wherein it is that the difference lies. The one kind of law is framed by a living master for the obedience of living subjects, and may be called juridical law. The other is framed by a living master also, for amid the diversity of operations it is God who worketh all in all; but it is not by a compliance of the will that an obedience is rendered thereunto—it is by the force of those natural principles wherewith the things in question are endowed, and in virtue of which they move and act and operate in that one way which is agreeable to their nature. This kind of law would by philosophers be called physical law. The one is a preceptive rule for the government of willing and accountable creatures. The other is an operative principle residing in every creature, be it animate or be it inanimate—and determining it by its own force to certain uniform processes.

Now the question comes to be, in which of these two senses shall we understand this term law in the text before us? We think that though it occurs twice, both of these must be understood in the same sense; and both indeed appear to be determined to the same sense by the relation in which they stand as rivals or as opposites. When the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes us free from the law of sin and of death, it

is either by the authority of one master prevailing over the authority of another master, or by the force of one influencing principle within us prevailing over the force of another such principle. To determine which of these two it is, we shall begin with the consideration of the law of sin and death, which though it comes last in the verse, is first in the order of ascendancy over the human mind; and from the nature of the thralldom under which it brings us, may lead us to think aright of the nature of our deliverance therefrom.

It must be quite obvious then to you all, that the law of sin and death is not a law that is enacted in the way of jurisprudence; but like every other law of nature, it is an operative principle that worketh certain effects and emanates certain processes in the subject where it resides. It is neither more nor less, in fact, than the sinful tendency of our constitution; and is quite the same with what in the preceding chapter is termed 'the law of sin that is in our members.' It is called a 'law,' because, like the laws of gravitation or magnetism or electricity, it impels those upon whom it acts in a certain given direction; and has indeed the power and the property of a moving force expressly ascribed to it, when it is said to war against the law of the mind, and to be incessantly aiming after the establishment of its own mastery over those whom it tries to lead captive and to enslave. And to keep up this conception of a law in the second sense of it, let it be remembered that death is as much the natural consequence of sin, as it is the penalty of sin—that it forms the termination of an historical process by a law that regulates the succession of events, as well as the termination of a juridical process under the power and authority of a lawgiver—that regarded in its true character as the extinction of the life of godliness in the soul; as the death of all spiritual joy; as the darkness and the misery of a heart where vice and selfishness and carnality are the alone occupiers; as that moral hell the rudiments of which every unconverted man carries about with him here, and the settled maturity of which he will bear with him to the place of condemnation hereafter; as that state of distance and disruption from God, which may now be supportable so long as earth spreads its interests and gratifications before us, but which so soon as earth passeth away will leave the soul in desolation and terror, and without a satisfying portion throughout eternity, such a death as this comes as regularly and as surely in the train of our captivity to sin,

and by the operation of a law, in the moral or spiritual department of nature, as does the fruit of any tree, or the produce of any husbandry, by the laws of the vegetable kingdom. The sinful tendency that worketh in man bringeth forth fruit unto death; just as the vegetative tendency that is in the foxglove bringeth forth poison. In both it is a fruit of bitterness, and in both the effect of an established law—apart from the awards and the retributions of a lawgiver.

Now the way in which this tendency is counteracted, is just by an opposite tendency that is implanted in the mind for the purpose of making head against it and of at length prevailing over it. The law of the Spirit of life just expresses the tendency and the result of an operative principle in the mind that has force enough to arrest the operation of the law of sin and death, and at length to emancipate us therefrom. It is deposited within as the germ of a new character, in virtue of which there are evolved the desire, and the purpose, and the activities, and at length all the conquests and all the achievements of a life of holiness. The affection of the old man meets with a new affection to combat and to overmatch it. If the originating principle of sin might be reduced to one brief expression, and so be shortly designed the love of the creature—the originating principle of the spiritual life might also be briefly and summarily designed the love of the Creator. These two appetites are in a state of unceasing hostility. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. The law of sin and of death warreth against the law of the mind; and this law of the mind in the preceding context is just the law of the Spirit of life in the verse that is now before us.

Let me now come forth in succession with a few distinct remarks upon this verse, with a view to complete our understanding of it.

First, You are already aware how it is the Spirit of God that infuses this principle into the mind, and sets agoing the law of its operation. Hence it may properly be denominated the law of the Spirit—even as the opposite process which it has to struggle against and at length to vanquish, is called the law of sin—a new tendency imparted to the soul for the purpose of arresting the old tendency, and at length of extinguishing it; and called the law of the Spirit, just because referable to the Holy Ghost, by whose agency it is that the new affection has been inspired, that the new moral force has been made to

actuate the soul and give another direction than before to the whole history.

But secondly—Why is it called the law of the Spirit of life? Just because he in whom this law is set agoing is spiritually minded; and as to be carnally minded is death, so to be spiritually minded is life. It is the law of the Spirit, because of the agent who sets this law agoing in the soul. It is the law of the Spirit of life, because of the new state into which it ushers the soul. It is like the awakening of man to a new moral existence, when he is awakened to the love of that God whom before he was glad to forget; and of whom he never thought but as a Being shrouded in unapproachable majesty, and compassed about with the jealousies of a law that had been violated. It is like a resurrection from the grave, when, quickened and aroused from the deep oblivion of nature, man enters into living fellowship with his God; and He, who ere now had been regarded with terror or utterly disregarded, bath at length reclaimed unto Himself all our trust and all our tenderness. It is the introduction of a before earthly creature into a region of other prospects and other manifestations, when now he can eye eternity with hope, and look up with confidence to the Lord and Disposer of his eternity. It is like imparting to him another breath, and enduing him as it were with another vitality, when, for the animal and the earthly desires which once monopolized all his affections, there spring up in his bosom the desire of spiritual excellence, and a love that reacheth unto all, and the new moral ambition that the image of the Godhead be again implanted upon his character. There is now a satisfaction and a harmony within, a rightly going mechanism of the soul that is in unison with the great purposes of his being, a refreshing sense of that native enjoyment which goodness and righteousness and truth are ever sure to bring along with them, the sunshine of a heart at peace and of a heart inhaling the purity of holy and celestial aspirations—all which make him feel as if he had entered on a life that was new, and in comparison with which the whole of his former existence appears to him corrupt as a sepulchre, and worthless as nonentity itself. It is only now that he has begun to live, because now hath the law of the Spirit of life begun to operate in his bosom; and only now hath that well of water been struck out in his heart, which to him, even in the life that now is, is precious as the elixir of immortality, and springeth up unto life everlasting.

And thirdly—When is it that this visitation of the Spirit descendeth upon the soul? When is it that this new law is set up within it; and so a power or a tendency is established there, that arrests and at length subjugates the old one? We think that the answer is to be gathered from the single expression of the law of the Spirit of life in *Christ Jesus*. Whatever the import of the phrase ‘in Christ Jesus’ may be, it is when so in Him that this law taketh effect upon us. As surely as when you enter a garden of sweets one of your senses becomes awakened to the perfumes wherewith its air is impregnated—as surely as when emerging from the darkness of a close apartment to the glories of an unclouded day another of your senses is awakened to the light and beauty of all that is visible—so surely when you enter within the fold of Christ’s mediatorship, and are so united with Him as to be in Him according to the Bible signification of this phrase, then is it that there is an awakening of the inner man to the beauties of holiness. We refer to a law of nature the impression of every scene in which he is situated on the senses of the observer; and it is also by the operation of such a law that—if in Christ Jesus—we become subject to a quickening and a reviving touch that raises us to spiritual life, and maketh us susceptible of all its joys and all its aspirations. We have the immutability of Nature’s laws, or rather the immutability of Him who presideth over the constancy of Nature’s processes, as our guarantee for an ordination which can never fail—that he who is in Christ Jesus is a new creature, that he who is in Christ Jesus walketh not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

But fourthly—What have we to do that we may attain the condition of being in Christ Jesus? I know of no other answer than that you have to believe in Him. I know of no other instrument by which the disciple is grafted in Christ Jesus, even as the branches are in the vine, than faith. And certain it is that a connexion is often directly affirmed in the Bible, between the act of believing and the descent of a quickening and sanctifying influence from above. The Holy Ghost is given to those who believe. The promise of the Spirit is unto faith: ‘In whom after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.’ ‘While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard.’ ‘Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.’ Jesus is ‘the light of the world, and the Light is the life of men:’ all pointing to a law of connexion

between our belief of the truth as it is in Jesus, and our being set at liberty by a divine power for a life of new and holy obedience.

And again, to recur to the term law as having the same sense in this verse that physical law or a law of nature has—what a security does it hold out for the sanctification of every believer! If we believe we are in Christ Jesus—if we are in Christ Jesus, the Spirit will put forth such an energy as shall overmatch the corrupt principle that is within us, and set us free from its tyranny; and all this in virtue of an ordination so certain and so unfailing, as to rank with those laws which have stamped an unalterable constancy on all the processes that are going on around us. There is nought that so arrests the admiration of philosophers as the inflexibility of Nature—the certainty wherewith the observations of the past may be turned into prophecies for the future—the sure evolution of the same phenomena in the same circumstances; and how, without one hair-breadth of deviation, the same trains and the same successions will be repeated over again till the end of the world. It is thus that the seasons roll in their unchanging courses; and that the mighty orbs of the firmament maintain their periods of invariable constancy; and that astronomers, presuming on the uniformity of Nature in all her processes, can—to within a second of deviation—compute the positions and the distances and the eclipses of these heavenly bodies for thousands of the years that are to come;—and not only so, but throughout all the departments of Nature to which the eye of man hath had access upon earth do we witness a uniformity rigid as fate, and which without a miracle is never violated—insomuch that there are some philosophers who have made a divinity of Nature, and who, conceiving that had there been a God there would have been more of freedom and of fluctuation in the appearances of things, have affirmed this universe, instead of a creation, to be the product of some mysterious and eternal necessity, under which all things move onward without change and without deviation. But the Christian knows better how to explain the generality and the certainty of Nature's laws, and that is not because Nature is unchangeable, but because God is unchangeable. What has been once done has been best done, and cannot be amended; and so in the same circumstances will it again and again and again be repeated. It is the perfect and unerring wisdom of Nature's God which has banished all caprice, and

stamped such a reigning consistency on the whole of Nature's processes: and when we find that each of these processes is denominated a law, and that this very term, in this very sense of it, is employed to express the union that there is between belief in Christ and the putting forth of a renewing and a sanctifying influence on the believer—I fear not lest the obedience of the gospel should lead to Antinomianism; but grant me only a true faith in the mind of an aspirant after heaven, and there will I confidently look for virtue and for holiness.

Both the certainty of Nature and the certainty of God's word are very finely expressed together in the book of Psalms: "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven. Thy faithfulness is unto all generations; thou hast established the earth and it abideth. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, for all are thy servants."

And therefore would I have you to be ever dwelling upon that truth, the belief of which it is that brings down the Spirit of God upon your soul; and the very presence of which to the mind bears a charm and a moral energy along with it. It is a thing of mystery to the general world; but to the Christian indeed it is a thing of experience and not of mystery. Never does the way of new obedience lie more invitingly clear and open before him, than when he finds the guilt and the reckoning of his past iniquities, whereby its entrance was formerly beset, all done away through the power of the great gospel sacrifice. And never does he move with such alacrity at the bidding of the Saviour, as when, under a sense of the purchased reconciliation, he feels the debt of obligation to Him for all his peace in time, and all his hopes in eternity. And never does the vigorous inspiration of light and love and freedom come so copiously upon him from the upper sanctuary as when, praying with confidence in the name of Christ, he obtains from Him the presence of the witness and the comforter. The powers and principles of the new creature are all alimented by these various exercises of faith; and so the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus makes him free from the law of sin and of death.

But to conclude. This freedom will be perfect in heaven, but on earth it is not so. Here it is not that freedom by which you are rid of the presence of sin. It is only that freedom by which you are rid of its tyranny. While you are in the body you will be vexed with its solicitations, and surprised perhaps into an occasional overthrow, and at all events be so annoyed

by its near and besetting artifices, that you must never let down the vigilance of a prepared and determined warrior. The process by which sin leadeth unto death consists of various steps, from the lust which conceiveth and bringeth forth—and at length, if not arrested, will finish in deeds and habits of sinfulness which land the unhappy apostate in destruction. By the law of the Spirit of life you will be kept free of this awful catastrophe; but not without many a weary struggle against sin in its incipient tendencies, that these tendencies may be kept in check—against sin in its restless appetites, that these appetites may be denied and at length starved into utter mortification—against sin in its tempting thoughts and tempting imaginations, that the desires of the spirit as well as the deeds of the body may be chastened into obedience, and thus your holiness be perfected. It will be freedom, no doubt; but the freedom of a country that has taken up arms against its tyrants or its invaders—of a country that has refused submission, but must fight to maintain its independence—of a country from whose gates the battle has not yet been turned away, but where the enemy is still in force, and the watchfulness of all is kept alive by the perpetual alarm of hostile designs and hostile movements. “But ye are of God, little children, and shall overcome, because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith.”

LECTURE XLVI.

ROMANS VIII. 3, 4.

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

WE have already explained the distinction between a physical law, whereby is established that order of succession, in which one event follows another; and a juridical law, or a law of authority, for the government of rational and responsible creatures. In the verse immediately preceding, the word occurs twice; but at each time with such an annexed specification, as points to the former rather than to the latter meaning of the term. There is first the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which marks, we think, that established order in the Divine administration of grace, whereby all who are in Christ Jesus have a reviving and a sanctifying influence put forth upon them. There is then the law of sin and of death, which marks another of those constant successions, that obtain either between two events or two states in the history of any individual—even that by which sin is followed up with an extinction of the spiritual life, with an utter incapacity for sacred employments or sacred delights; and when superadded to the negation of all those sensibilities that enter into the happiness of heaven, you have as the natural consequences of sin, the agony of self-reproach, the undying worm of a conscience that never ceases to haunt and to upbraid you.

But you will observe that the term 'law' in the verse before us is used generally and without any accompaniments. We are not aware of any passage in the Bible, where, if so introduced, it does not signify that law which God hath instituted for the moral government of His creatures; and there can be no doubt that it is to be understood in this juridical sense on the present occasion. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak

through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.'

But what is it that the law could not do? The answer to this is, we think, to be gathered from the next verse. It could not accomplish that end for the bringing about of which God sent His Son into the world, and executed upon Him the condemnation that we have incurred; and this He did, it is said, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. This then is what the law failed to achieve. It could not fulfil in us its own righteousness. It could not cause us to exemplify that which itself had enacted. It could not fashion us, the children of men, according to its own pure and beautiful model; and all perfect in excellence as its light was, it could not obtain the unsullied reflection of it from the living history of any of our species. As to any efficiency upon us, it was a dead letter; and did as little for the morality of the world, as if, struck with impotency itself, it had been bereft of all dignity and been reduced to a dishonoured thing, without the means or the right of vindication. The law issued forth, and with much of circumstance too, its precepts and its promulgations. But it is quite palpable that man did not obey; and, whether we look to the wickedness which stalketh abroad and at large over the face of the earth, or rest the question on each individual who breathes upon it—that the righteousness thereof, instead of being fulfilled, has been utterly and universally fallen from.

But the apostle introduces a caution here, that he might not appear to derogate from the law, by ascribing to it any proper or inherent impotency. And for this purpose he lets us know what the precise quarter was in which the failure originated—not in that the law was weak in itself, but in that it was weak through the flesh. To the law there belong a native power and efficiency, in all its lessons and all its enforcements, which is admirably fitted to work out a righteousness on the character of those to whom it is addressed. For this purpose there is no want of force or of fitness in the agent; but there may be a want of fitness in the subject upon which it operates. It is no reflection on the penmanship of a beautiful writer, that he can give no adequate specimen of his art on the coarse or absorbent paper which will take on no fair impression of the character that he traces upon its surface. Nor is it any reflection on the power of an accomplished artist, that he can raise no monument thereof, from the stone which crumbles at every touch, and so is

incapable of being moulded into the exquisite form of his own faultless and finished idea. And so of the law, when it attempts to realize a portrait of moral excellence on the groundwork of our nature. It is because of the groundwork, and not of the law, that the attempt has failed; and so when he tells us of what the law could not do, lest we should be left to imagine that this was from any want of force or capacity in the law, he adds 'in that it was weak through the flesh.'

And it is to be observed, that the fulfilment of the righteousness of the law in us was a thing to be desired—not merely that in us a beauteous moral spectacle might be reared, and so the universe become richer as it were than before in worth and in virtue—but that our righteousness should be of such a kind as would satisfy the law, as would render to the law its due, as would secure all the homage that rightfully belongs to it. This you will perceive is a distinct object from the former. That the law should impress the worth and the loveliness of its own virtues upon our character, is one thing; that the law should in us achieve the vindication of its own honour, is another. It could not do the first, through the weakness of the flesh; and as little can it do the second, excepting in those on whom it wreaks the vengeance of its insulted authority. It may be said to fulfil its own righteousness, in those to whom it serves as the ministry of condemnation. It, in the act of punishment, gives full proof of its own awful and inviolable majesty. It is a work of righteousness on the part of the law, when it pours forth the wrath and executes the penalty that are due to disobedience. There is then open demonstration made of its strict and sacred character; and the charge of impotency cannot be preferred against the law, as to the manifestation and fulfilment of its righteousness. It does not work in the persons of the impenitent the virtues which it enjoins, nor fulfil in this sense its own righteousness upon them; but it wreaks upon these persons the vengeance which it threatens, and in this sense may be said to make fulfilment of its righteousness. In the persons again of those who walk after the Spirit, the virtues enjoined by the law are effectually wrought; but how, would we ask, can the law, in reference to them, acquit itself of its juridical honours?—for they too have offended. The experience of every struggling Christian in the world bears testimony to his many violations. There is, all his life long, a shortcoming from the law's strictness and the law's purity. There is a constant offence rendered by us in

these vile bodies, against that commandment which will admit of no compromise, and suffer no degradation. So that even though the personal workmanship of righteousness should be in progress—though the moral picture should be gradually brightening into a faultless conformity to that pattern that hath been shown to us from the Mount—though at length our likeness to the law should be consummated—yet is that very law subject even now to perpetual affronts from us on its holiness and majesty; and the question remains, how, in these circumstances, shall its righteousness be vindicated upon us, even though we do walk after the Spirit, and do not walk after the flesh?

You all understand, I trust, how it is that the gospel adjusts this deficiency. It is stated in the verse before us; and though stated often, it is like ointment, which though often poured forth, is always the same and always precious. There was something more, you will perceive, than a Spirit necessary to work in us a personal righteousness—a sacrifice was necessary to make atonement for our personal guilt. Though the former operation were to prosper onward every day to its full and final accomplishment—yet without the latter provision there would have been still the spectacle held forth of a degraded law and a dishonoured Lawgiver. The righteousness of the law might have been fulfilled in regard to the impress made by it on the character of man, but it would not have been fulfilled in regard to the perfect and undeviating adherence due by man at all times to its own authority. And so, to use the expression of the apostle John, the Saviour came not by water only, but by water and blood. It was not enough to regenerate, it was also necessary to atone. Without the shedding forth of the Spirit there would have been no righteousness infused; but without the shedding of blood there could have been no righteousness imputed. There behoved to be the one, for the renewal of man unto obedience; and there behoved to be the other, for the remission of his sins: and those are the weightiest verses of the Bible, where in one short and memorable sentence, both are propounded to us as the essentials of a sinner's restoration.

Now the passage before us is one out of many exemplifications that may be given us of this twofold announcement. It might be rendered clearer to you, perhaps, by a short paraphrase. 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God did, by sending His own Son, in the

likeness of sinful flesh, and for a sin-offering—so as thereby to condemn sin in the flesh. And this He did, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.’

You will observe here, that the first step was to make ample reparation for the injuries sustained by the law; and so by satisfying its rights, making a full vindication of its righteousness. Ere the sinner could be operated upon so as to be transformed, the law which he had broken, it would appear, behoved to have compensation for the outrage done to it. There was a need be that the threatened penalty should not be arrested, but have its course—that it should break forth into the open and manifest discharge which might announce to the world both the evil of sin and the truth and justice of that God who had uttered His proclamations against it : And there seems to be a further, though perhaps to us an inscrutable propriety, in the chastisement of our peace having been borne by one who bore our nature—in the Son having been sent under no other likeness than the likeness of sinful flesh—in humanity having had to suffer the vengeance which humanity incurred. And though it required the strength of the Godhead to bear the burden of our world’s atonement—yet seemeth there to have been, in order to the effect of this great mystery, some deep necessity that we cannot fully penetrate, why it should be laid on God manifest in the flesh, and who took not upon Him the nature of angels, but the nature of the seed of Abraham.

And so the incarnate God suffered for our world.

For this purpose did He become flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone. There were laid upon Him the iniquities of us all; and from the intelligible symptoms of a sore and cruel agony which even the divine energies of His nature did not overbear, may we conclude that the ransom has been fully paid—and so the worth and authority of the law have been fully magnified.

And this, it would appear, is an essential step to our sanctification. There behoved to be this satisfaction rendered to the law, ere they who had transgressed it could be turned to its love and its willing obedience. That law which was written on tables of stone, had to be appeased for its violated honour, ere it was transferred into the fleshly tablets of our heart, and became there the spontaneous and emanating principle of all goodness. The blood of remission had to be shed, ere the water of regeneration could be poured forth; and so the Son of God came in the like-

ness of sinful flesh, and became a sin-offering, and sustained the whole weight of sin's condemnation—and, after ascending from the grave, had that Holy Ghost committed unto Him, who was not given in abundance to men till the Son of man was glorified—and it is under the power of this mighty agent, that all who put their trust in Him are enabled to walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

Thus, historically, the atonement by Jesus Christ took place before that more abundant ministration of the Spirit which obtains under the economy of the gospel; and so also personally, a belief in that atonement has the precedency to a sanctifying operation over the sinner's heart. Not till we accept Jesus Christ as the Lord our righteousness, shall we experience Him to be the Lord our strength. Not till we put faith in that blood by which our guilt is washed away, shall we be free to love the Being whom before we were afraid of. Nor till pardon is made known shall we be loosened from the bonds of despair, or at least of callous indifference; and it is only through a pardon which is sealed by the blood of divine expiation, that to peace with God we can add a practical and purifying sense of the holiness of God. It is thus that a belief in the propitiation is as sure to regenerate as it is to reconcile; and the knowledge that Christ was condemned in the flesh for our offences, is that which gives impulse to that heavenly career in which we walk no longer after the flesh but after the Spirit.

We read in one Epistle of the ministration of condemnation and the ministration of righteousness. The former is that which takes place under the law, when its denunciations have their course; and as all are guilty, all are liable to the tremendous penalties of guilt. The apostle says of this ministration that it is glorious; and glorious certainly in the exhibition which it gives of the Godhead—of that sacredness which admits of no stain, and would recoil from the most distant approaches of evil—of that pure and lofty throne, whence every award comes forth with authority inflexible—of that rectitude which will not hold compromise with iniquity at all, and rather than suffer it to draw near, will send out flames from the awful sanctuary of its habitation to burn up and to destroy it—of that jealousy, which, like a consuming fire, spreadeth abroad among the hosts of the rebellious, so that not one shall remain a monument of God's connivance at that which He utterly abhors—of a dread intolerance for moral evil, even in the slightest shades and degrees

of it, so that, rather than deign one look of acceptance to sin, every sinner must irrevocably perish. In all this, says the apostle, there is a glory—yet there is another ministration, even one of righteousness, which excelleth in glory. It is that which takes place under the gospel; and under which all the former glory is kept entire, nay, enhanced into a brighter manifestation. For there too is the Law made honourable, and there the Law-giver is evinced to be inflexibly just and jealous of the authority of His government; and there the sacredness of Heaven's jurisprudence is made to shine forth, if not in the punishment of sin, at least in the atonement which has been made for it; and there the vengeance due to guilt appeareth more strikingly than before, by its transference from the head of the sinner to the head of the illustrious Substitute who trembled and suffered and died in his stead. The glories of truth and of holiness are more highly illustrated under our new economy than under the old one, and with this additional glory which is all its own—that there mercy sits in benignant triumph among the now vindicated attributes of the Godhead; and sinners, who else would have been swept away into an eternity of pain and of deep oblivion, are transformed anew into the righteousness which they had lost, have their place again in the family of God—a part among the hal-lujahs of the unfallen.

Let me conclude with two practical observations. In the first place mark, how, in order that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, it is not enough that we walk as spiritual men. The more spiritual in fact that you are, the greater will be your sensibility to the remaining deficiencies of your heart and temper and conversation—the more oppressive will be your consciousness of the weight of your still unquelled carnality—the more affecting will be your remembrance, every evening, of the slips and the shortcomings of the day that hath passed over you; so that if you only had to do with the law, and if its righteousness were the condition of your acceptance with God—you, though making daily progress even unto perfection, would by every new addition to your spiritual tenderness, be only aggravating your despair. There behoved to be a daily remembrance of sin; and this, if unmixed with faith in the great propitiation, would leave you heartless and hopeless as to all the purposes of obedience. So that to the last half-hour even of a most triumphant course in sanctification, you must never lose sight of Him on whom has been laid the condemnation of all your offences—the

confessions that you make (and you will have to make them perpetually) must be over the head of the great Sacrifice—you must still keep by your great High Priest, as the anchor of your soul; and never for a moment transfer your dependence from Him to your own righteousness—you must look for all your acceptance only in the Beloved; and count for your justification before God on nothing else than on Jesus Christ and on Him crucified.

Now, this comes to be a mystery, which the world can never be made to understand by explanation; and which it is only for a Christian to realize in his own experience. There are constant alternations of sin and of sorrow in the history of every believer; and the guilt of the daily transgression is actually washed away, in this case, by the evening acknowledgment—the act of confession on his part being in very deed followed up by an act of forgiveness on the part of God. “For if any man confess his sins, God is faithful and just to forgive him his sins.” And then the singularity is (yet if you have no part in that singularity you are no Christian), that under this process of daily offending and daily application to that blood by which it is again obliterated, there should, on the part of the disciple, be so anxious an avoidance of evil—such a dread of sin and so grievous a discomfort when he falls into it—as honest an aspiring after his own personal righteousness as if it formed the price of his salvation; and withal, the same busy performance of duty that behoved to take place had the old economy of the law been again set up, and heaven to be challenged upon the merits of our own obedience. Yes! my brethren, it is the wondrous property of the gospel, that while it speaks peace to the sinner it charms the power of sin away from his heart—inducing him to love the law at the very time that it holds out an impunity for all its violations; and, with the soft whispers of reconciliation that it sends into the offender’s ear, sending along with them a moral suasion into his heart, that gains it over to the side of all the commandments.

And hence my second remark is, that however zealously the righteousness of Christ must be contended for as the alone plea of a sinner’s acceptance, yet that the benefit thereof rests upon none save those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. Light where it may, it must carry a sanctifying power along with it; and you have no part nor lot in the matter if you are not pressing onward in grace and in all godliness. It is not

enough that upon Christ all its honours have been amply vindicated—upon you who believe in Christ all its virtues must be engraven; and it is thus, and thus alone, that there is brought about a complete and a satisfying fulfilment of its righteousness. The law is not made void by faith, but by faith it is established; and while, on the one hand, all the outrage done to it when written on tables of stone has been repaired by the noblest of satisfactions—on the other hand does it come forth again in all the brightness of a new and a living lustre, by its being now written on the fleshly tablets of our heart. The handwriting of ordinances that was against us, and contrary to us, has been taken out of the way, having been nailed to the cross of Christ; but the hand of Jesus Christ as the Lord their Sanctifier is ever on the persons of those who believe in Him—beautifying them with His salvation, and spreading over their characters all the **graces** of holiness.

LECTURE XLVII.

ROMANS VIII. 5.

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

I SHOULD like if I could give you a clear understanding of the difference that there is between your simply dwelling in the flesh as your tenement, and your being immersed, with the practical consent of your will and mind, in those pursuits and pleasures which are natural to the flesh. And the first thing which might occur, for the illustration of this difference, is to offer, as expressive of it, that distinction of meaning which one feels between the two phrases, 'to be in the flesh' and 'to be after the flesh.' The one may be thought simply to imply that the flesh is the place of the soul's present residence ; and the other, that all the soul's inclinations and energies are in full prosecution of those objects which minister to the appetites of the flesh. But then you have the very phrase of being in the flesh applied in Scripture not to the state of one who barely occupies the flesh as his present tabernacle, but of one who delights in the flesh as his congenial and much-loved element. And it must be in this latter sense of the phrase that it occurs at the distance of a very few verses from the one now submitted to you—when it is said that they who are in the flesh cannot please God ; and when it is further said, that ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.

At the same time it must be remarked, that, in other passages of the Bible, the phrase of being in the flesh denotes the soul's simple occupation of a fleshly tabernacle, and not the soul's immersion in fleshly habits or fleshly desires. The apostle who said 'Christ liveth in me,' also says 'I live in the flesh ;' and that to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. In this sense too, even Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh ; and it was a most essential point of orthodoxy, that he had come in

the flesh. In both of these instances flesh was the temporary abode; but in neither of them was it the chosen or the much loved home. It is true of both, that though in the flesh they walked not after the flesh; and though we have not been so fortunate as to find the former phrase to be in the Bible universally characteristic of nothing more than simple occupancy—yet we believe of the latter phrase, that it is uniformly descriptive of that state in which a man abandons himself to the propensities of nature, and lives in the full prosecution of its delights or its interests.

And the distinction between these two things is very well marked by the apostle within the compass of one verse—“Though we walk in the flesh, we do not walk according to the flesh—we do not war after the flesh.”

And it is well that in this fifth verse we have a descriptive clause, by which we are presented with something like a definition of being after the flesh. They who are after the flesh mind the things of it. It is not that the flesh assails them with its suggestions, for this it does, and often as forcibly with those who resist the suggestions as with those who yield to them. But it is that their mind follows after the flesh—that they make a study and a business of its enjoyments—that they prosecute them in thought, in purpose, and in will. Some there are, who dwell in the flesh, and so are surrounded with the importunity of its delights and temptations; but who nevertheless abide in the firm attitude of withstanding them all. Their mind is not after the flesh, but in opposition to it. But for these some, are there the many who are dragged willingly along in that very direction in which the flesh draws them—who not only resign themselves implicitly to the force of its instigations; but who, even in their hours of calm and dispassionate exemption from them, are in some way labouring or devising for the pleasures and accommodations of the perishable body—whose mind, both in its likings and in the exercise of its faculties, is wholly given over to the pursuit of these things. What the things are we may learn from the apostle John—when he bids us love not the world neither the things that are in the world, and when he comprehends these things in the one summary description of all that is in the world, which he maketh to consist of the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eye and the pride of life. Thus are we to understand of all those who are after the flesh, that either, as slaves, they are tyrannized over by the master-idols of

sensuality or avarice or ambition; or that, with a sort of free and more sovereign agency, they at least give themselves up to the object of providing for these gratifications—that, if not dragged after them by the force of appetite, they at least drive after them, and that of spontaneous and withal of steady and settled choice. And thus, in the habitual preference of their mind as well as in the propensities of their animal system, are they altogether entitled to the denomination of worldly.

And there is one thing that you would do well to advert unto. It is not necessary that you mind all the things of the flesh in order to constitute you a carnal man. It is enough to fasten this character upon you, that you have given yourself over to the indulgence or the pursuit even of so few as one of these things. A miser may not be a debauchee, and neither the one nor the other may be an aspiring politician. But whatever the reigning passion may be, if it have the effect of attaching you to some one object that is in the world and which with the world will terminate and perish—then still your mind is in subjection to an idol, and the death of the carnally minded is your inheritance and your doom. Be not deceived then, ye men, who, engrossed with the cares and observant of all the sobrieties of business, are not addicted to the profligacies of dissipation—nor ye, who, heedless of wealth's accumulations, can mix an occasional generosity with the squanderings of intemperance and riot—nor ye, who, alike exempted from sordid avarice or debasing sensuality, have yet, in the pursuit of an ascendancy over the minds and the measures of your fellow-men, made power the reigning felicity of your existence—nor yet even ye, who, without any settled aim after one or other of these gratifications, fluctuate in giddy unconcern from one of this world's frivolities to another. None of you mind all the things of the flesh; yet each of you minds one or other of these things, and that to the entire practical exclusion of the things of the Spirit from the preference of your habitual regards. We do not charge you with a devotion of heart to all those things in the world which are opposite to the love of the Father, any more than we charge you with idolatrously falling down in obeisance to all the divinities of a heathen polytheism. But still if only one of these divinities be your god, this were enough to constitute you an idolater, and to convict you of a sacrilegious disownal of the King who is eternal and immutable. And so your one earthly appetite, though free from the tyranny of all the others—your one habit of ungodliness,

though it be the only one that breaks out into visible expression in the history of your life—of itself renders you a carnal man; of itself exiles you from the spiritual territory; of itself proves that you are still one of the children of this world, and that you have not passed from death unto life.

‘They who are after the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit.’ The man to whom this character belongeth is as effectually tabernacled in flesh, as he who is altogether carnal; and the natural tendencies of his constitution to evil may be as strong and as urgent as those of the latter. By temperament, for instance, he may have as great a taste for luxury—by original disposition, he may be as apt to rejoice in grandeur or in wealth; and there be spontaneously within him, the same kindlings of ambition, or the same grovellings of sensual and avaricious desire. But though he feels these impulses, yet he walketh not after them; and that just because his mind is wholly set against them—whereas the mind of the other goeth wholly along with them. It is the direction of that sovereign faculty the will, which explains the difference. If this be enlisted on the side of the flesh, as it is with every unconverted man, then he sinneth wilfully. If this be enlisted on the side of the Spirit, as it is with every man who hath truly turned him unto the Lord Jesus Christ, then he may sin accidentally; and in some moment of sleep or of surprise he may be overtaken; and ere the will, as it were, has had time to rally and to recover, some outpost may have been carried, and even some advantage have been gained to the length of a most humiliating overthrow. But deep is the grief that is thereby awakened; and strenuous is the resistance that is thereby summoned into the future warfare; and heavy is that mourning of sackcloth and of ashes wherewith the soul of the penitent offender is afflicted; and though he hath stumbled on the way of temptation, he yet utterly refuses to walk therein—so giving testimony to the mode in which the leading tendencies of his spirit have most painfully and most offensively been thwarted by the momentary power and assault of his great adversary; and that the whole drift of his choosing and deliberating and purposing faculties is indeed on the side of God and the side of righteousness.

The remark that we made, however, about the things of the flesh, is not applicable to the things of the Spirit. A giving up of the mind to but one thing of the flesh, makes you a carnal man. But a spiritual man gives up himself not to one thing,

but to all the things of the Spirit. To be the servant of any other master than God marks you an idolater; and for this purpose it is not necessary that you should obey all the masters who are apart from God or hostile to God. But to be the servant of God Himself, you must obey Him in all things—you must aspire at least, and that in firmness and in truth, at universal conformity—you must mind not merely one thing, but all the things which He authoritatively lays upon you. And these are just the things of the Spirit, whose fruit is not in any one branch of righteousness, or in any specific number of them, but whose fruit is in all righteousness and goodness and truth. His office is to put the law in your heart, and so to give you a taste and a liking for all its requirements. It is not enough that you maintain the sobrieties of human conduct, if not its equities also; it is not enough that you be strict in honour, if not also kind and gentle in humanity; it is not enough that you excel your fellows in all the virtues of society—you must be further arrayed in the virtues of sacredness. And neither is it enough that a general Sabbath complexion be upon your history—ye must proceed on Christianity being the religion of your life, being the guide and the ornament of your daily conversation—a mingling ingredient, which diffuses itself throughout the mass of your ordinary affairs—a light that sheds its pure and celestial tint over the whole of your path, and leaves not one little space in the field of humanity unirradiated by its beams.

You have already heard me expatiate on the difficulty of ascertaining the real state and character of one's mind by a direct examination of it; and if the immediate question were put to the inner man, whether he minded the things of the flesh or those of the Spirit, a clear answer might not so readily be obtained—and that, more especially, as they who are spiritual often feel on the one hand the instigations of the flesh; and they who are carnal have at times the visitation upon their heart of a wish and an aspiration and an effort however ineffectual after a life of sacredness. It is well then, that this verse supplies us with a test for the resolving of this ambiguity. They who mind the things of the flesh are they who walk after the flesh; and they who mind the things of the Spirit are they who walk after the Spirit. With both classes there may be the inward struggle of the opposite and conflicting elements—the one not being totally exempted from evil inclinations, and the

other not being totally bereft of their longing after godliness. When we look only within, it may be hard to say from the fight that is going on which of these two elements shall prevail. But this may be decisively gathered, if not from the battle itself, at least from the issue of the battle; or in other words, from the way in which it terminates upon the conduct. The spiritual man is urged by the corrupt propensities of his nature—nevertheless he follows not after them, and this from that preponderance of motive and of inward power on the side of what is good, which marks his mind to be set on the things of the Spirit. The carnal man is urged by the voice of conscience, and its remonstrances against all that is evil—nevertheless he obeys it not in deed, and this from that prevalency of force and of impulse on the side of what is corrupt, which marks his mind to be set on the things of the flesh. The working of the inner mechanism is not palpable. But the result of that working on the outward history is so; and thus from the stream do we learn the nature of the fountain, and by the test of their fruits do we know them.

LECTURE XLVIII.

ROMANS VIII. 6.

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

THE death which is here spoken of, is something more than the penal death that is inflicted on transgressors in the way of retribution. It is not a future but a present death which is here spoken of, and arises from the obtuseness or the extinction of certain feelings and faculties in the soul, which, if awake to their corresponding objects, would uphold a life of thoughts and sensations and regards altogether different from the actual life of unregenerated men. To the higher and spiritual life they are dead even now; and to estimate the soreness of this deprivation, just figure an affectionate father to have a paralysis inflicted on all those domestic feelings which bound him in love and endearment to the members of his own family. Then would you say of him, that he had become dead to the joys and the interests of home—that perhaps he was still alive to the gratifications of sense and of profligacy, but that what wont to constitute the main charm of his existence had now gone into annihilation—that to what at one time was the highest pleasurable feeling of his consciousness he had become as torpid as if he had literally expired—and that thus he was labouring under all the calamity of a death to that which occupies a high place among the delights of the feeling and the friendly and the amiable. And it is in a sense analogous to this that we are to understand the present death of all those who are carnally minded—not a death to any of the impressions that are made upon their senses from without—not a death to the animal enjoyments of which men are capable—not even, it may be, a death to many of the nobler delights either of the heart or of the understanding,—but a death to that which when really felt and enjoyed, is found to be the supreme felicity of man—a death to all that is spiritual—an utter extinction of those capacities by which we are fitted to prove those heavenly and seraphic

ecstasies that would liken us to angels—a hopeless apathy in all that regards our love to God, and to all that righteousness which bears upon it the impress of the upper sanctuary. It is our dormancy to these which constitutes the death that is here spoken of; and in virtue of which man is bereft, if not of his being, at least of the great end of his being, which is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever.

And you may further see how it is that such a death is not merely a thing of negation, but a thing of positive wretchedness. For with the want of all that is sacred or spiritual about him, there is still a remainder of feeling, which makes him sensible of his want—a general restlessness of the soul, on whose capacities there has been inflicted a sore mutilation; and from whose aspirings after undefinable good the object is ever melting away into hopeless and inaccessible distance—a remorse and a terror about invisible things which are ever and anon breaking forth, even amid the busy appliance of this world's opiates to stifle and overbear them. And there are other miseries that are sure to spring up from those carnal sensibilities which have undergone no death; from the pride that is met with incessant rebuke and mortification by the equal pride of our fellow-men; from the selfishness that comes into collision with all the selfishness of the unregenerated society around it; from the moral agonies which essentially adhere to malice and hatred and revenge; from the shame that is annexed, even on earth, to the pursuits of licentiousness; from the torture that lieth in its passions, and the gloomy desolation of heart which follows the indulgence of them: all these give to the sinner his foretaste of hell on this side of death; and whether they be aggravated or not by the fire and the brimstone and the arbitrary inflictions that are conceived to be discharged upon him in the place of vengeance, still they are enough, when earth is swept away, with all its refuges of amusement and business and guilty dissipation in which the mind can now be lulled into a forgetfulness of itself—they are enough to entail upon the second death and the eternal death a burden of enormous and incalculable wretchedness—a curse so felt and so agonized under by the outcasts of condemnation, as to make the utterance of Cain their theme of wailing and of weeping through all eternity, even that their punishment is greater than they can bear.

From what we have said of the death of those who are carnally minded, you will be at no loss to understand what is

meant by the life of those who are spiritually minded. We read of those who are alienated from the life of God, and to this it is that the spiritual find readmittance. They before stood afar off, and now are brought nigh. The blood of Christ hath consecrated for them a way of access; and the fruit of that access is delight in God—the charm of a confidence which they never felt before in His friendly and fatherly regard to them—a new moral gladness in the contemplation of that character which now stands revealed in all its graces, while it is disarmed of all its terrors—an assimilation of their own character to His, and so a taste for charity and truth and holiness; and a joy, both in the cultivation of all these virtues, and in the possession of a heart at growing unison with the mind and will of the Godhead. These are the ingredients of a present life, which is the token and the foretaste of life everlasting—an existence in the feelings and concerns of which all earthly existence is tasteless and unsatisfying; and to be awakened whereunto is a transition as great and more joyful than for a dead man to be awakened from his grave.

But let me pass on from the life to the peace of those who are spiritually minded. There are two great causes of disturbance to which the peace of the heart is exposed. The first is a brooding anxiety lest we shall be bereft or disappointed of some object on which our desires are set. The second is the agitation felt by all who have a taste for human kindness; and which taste is most painfully agonized amid the fierceness and the tumult and the din of human controversy. You will at once perceive how the man who is spiritually minded rises above the first of these disquietudes—for with him there is an object paramount to all which engrosses the care of a worldly man, and on which his desires are supremely set; and so what to others are overwhelming mortifications, to him are but the passing annoyances of a journey; and the same revolution of fortune which would plunge the earthly in despair, leaves to him who is heavenly a splendid reversion of hope and of happiness; so that neither can the actual visitation of any disaster so utterly discomfit him, nor can the apprehension of its coming so torment his bosom with the dark imagery of poverty and ruin and blasted anticipations. To him there is an open vista, through which he can descry a harbour and a home on the other side of the stormy passage that leads to it; and this he finds enough to bear him up under all that vexes and dispirits

other men. The pure and lofty serene which lies beyond the grave gives a serene to his own bosom. The main question of his being is settled; and that enables him to sit loose to and to be lightly affected by all the inferior questions. His soul is at anchor; and so he is kept steady under all the fluctuations that would make utter shipwreck of the desires or the delights of the worldly. He is freed from the cares of fame, or of fortune, or of any other interest upon earth; and with a mind engrossed by that which is spiritual, and without room in it for the anxieties of what is seen and temporal, he, in as far as these anxieties are concerned, is at peace.

I know not a finer illustration of this topic, than one which may be gathered from a recorded conversation between Dr. Carey, the missionary at Serampore, and a wealthy merchant in Calcutta. One of his clerks had determined to give up all the prospects and emoluments of a lucrative situation, and henceforth devote himself to the work of evangelizing the heathen. His employer, to whom this looked a very odd and inexplicable resolution, called on Dr. Carey, and inquired from him the terms, and the advantages, and the preferments of this new line, to which a very favourite servant whom he was exceedingly loath to part with was now on the eve of betaking himself; and was very much startled to understand, that it was altogether a life of labour, and that there was no earthly remuneration whatever; that in truth it was not competent for any member of their mission to have property at all; that beyond those things which are needful for the body, there was not an enjoyment within the power or purchase of money which any one of them thought of aspiring after; that each of them, free from care like a commoner of nature, trusted that as the day came the provision would come, and never yet had been disappointed of their confidence; that with hearts set on their own eternity and the eternity of their fellow-creatures, they had neither time nor space for the workings of this world's ambition. So that, however occupied about the concerns of the soul, each felt light as the bird upon a thorn about the food and the raiment and the sufficiency of coming days, all which they cast upon Providence, and had ever yet found that Providence was indeed worthy of their reliance. There is a very deep interest to my mind in such a dialogue between a devoted missionary and a busy active aspiring merchant; but the chief interest of it lay in the confession of the latter, who seems to have been

visited with a glimpse of the secret of true happiness, and that after all he himself was not in the way to it—whose own experience told him that prosperous as he was, there was a plague in his very prosperity that marred his enjoyment of it; that the thousand crosses and hazards and entanglements of mercantile adventure had kept him perpetually on the rack, and rifled his heart of all those substantial sweets by which alone it can be purely and permanently gladdened. And from him it was indeed an affecting testimony—when, on contrasting his own life of turmoil and vexation and chequered variety, with the simple but lofty aims and settled dependence and unencumbered because wholly unambitious hearts of these pious missionaries, he fetched a deep sigh and said, that it was indeed a most enticing cause.

And some of you, perhaps, though not spiritual men, may have caught a like glimpse of the peace that the spiritually minded enjoy, in the recurrence of your weekly Sabbath—the very chime of whose morning bells may have the effect of tranquillizing you under the weight of this world's cares, and even from the pulpit ministrations may there descend a power to soothe and to sweeten and to elevate your bosoms, and while it continues to operate, all the perplexities of your business and common life may be forgotten. Now, just figure this influence, which with you may be flitting and momentary like a vision of romance—just figure it to be substantiated into a practical and a permanent habit of heavenly mindedness, and then you have the peace of the spiritual realized throughout the whole extent of their every-day history.

There is another cause by which the peace of many a heart is sadly torn—not by the fear of future misfortune but by the actual feeling of present malice and hostility—by being doomed to breathe in the rough atmosphere of debate; and having to witness the withering coldness and alienation that sit on the human countenance, as well as to hear the jarring discords of rancour and controversy when they come forth in unfriendly utterance from human lips. There are some minds to which the frown, and the fierceness, and the incessant threatenings of this moral warfare, are utterly insupportable—some who have a taste for cordiality, and cannot be happy when its smile and its softness and all its blessed charities are withdrawn from them—who, rather than be placed in the midst of unkindred spirits, would give up society and seek for recreation and repose among

the peaceful glories of nature—who long to be embowered amid the sweets of a solitude and a stillness into which the din of this fatiguing world would never enter; and where, in the calm delights of meditation and piety, they might lull their hearts into the forgetfulness of all its injustice and all its violence. It must have been some such affection as this that prompted the Archbishop Leighton, when he breathed out his desires for the lodge of a wayfaring man in the wilderness; and that haunted the whole public life of Luther, who, though dragged forth to the combats and the exposures of a very wide arena, yet felt all along how uncongenial they were to the right condition and wellbeing of the human spirit; and so did he unceasingly aspire after a tranquillity which he was never permitted to enjoy; a nursling of that storm which he had enough of softness most utterly to hate, and enough of intrepidity most manfully to brave; by nature a lover of quietness, yet by Providence had he his discipline and his doom amongst life's most boisterous agitations.

There is nought in the character of the spiritually minded that exempts them from the outward disturbance which has its source in the hatred and hostility of other men; but there is so much in this character that gives an inward stability, and sustains the patience and the hope of our souls even under the most outrageous ebullitions of human malignity, as most nobly to accredit the declaration of our text—that to be spiritually minded is not only life but peace. For there is the sense of a present God, in the feeling of whose love there is a sunshine which the world knoweth not, and which even the lowering of a hostile world in arms cannot utterly darken; and there is the prospect of a future heaven, in whose sheltering bosom it is known that the toil and the turbulence of this weary pilgrimage will soon be over; and there is even a charity, which mellows our present sensation of painfulness, and makes the revolt that is awakened by the coarse and vulgar exhibition of human asperity to be somewhat more tolerable—for we cannot fail to perceive, how much of delusion at all times mingles with the impetuosity of irritated feelings; and that were there more of mutual knowledge among the individuals of our species, there would be vastly more of mutual candour and amenity and love; and that the Saviour's plea in behalf of His enemies is in some sense applicable to all the enemies that we have in the world—"They know not what they do." The menace and the fury

and the fell vindictiveness that look all so formidable, are as much due to an infirmity of the understanding as to a diabolical propensity of the heart; and it does alleviate the offence that is given to our moral taste by the spectacle of malevolence, when one reflects that malice is not its only ingredient; that it often hangs as much by an error of judgment as by a perversity of the moral nature; that it needs only to be enlightened in order to be rectified; and that therefore there may be hope of deliverance from the ferocity of one's antagonists even in this world, as well as a sure and everlasting escape from it in those regions of beauty and of bliss, around which there is an impassable barrier of protection against all that offendeth—where, after having crossed the stormy passage of this world, the spirit will have to repose itself in peace and charity for ever.

In one word, and for the full vindication of our text, let it be observed, that though in the character of being spiritually minded there is no immunity from the tribulations that are in the world, yet there is a hiding-place and a refuge where the spiritual alone can find entry; so that though in the world they shall have tribulation, yet well may they be of good cheer, for in Christ they shall have peace.

LECTURE XLIX.

ROMANS VIII. 7, 8.

"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."

BUT it might appear from the seventh verse, that the peace spoken of in the last verse is peace with God—for the enmity which is here ascribed to the opposite state of being carnally minded, is enmity against God. Where there is enmity between two parties, each is displeased with the other; and the enmity of the carnal mind thus involves in it two distinct particulars. First, it implies a feeling, on the part of him who is its owner, of hostility against God, and this necessarily comes out of the very definition of the carnal mind. It were a contradiction in terms to say otherwise of the carnal mind than that it was enmity against God; for how, if all its preferences be toward the creature, can it be otherwise affected toward that Creator, who looks with a jealous eye on all such preference, and fastens upon it the guilt of idolatry—how, if its regards are wholly directed to sense and time, can it be otherwise than in a state of disregard to Him who is a spirit and invisible? If the law of God be a law of supreme love toward Himself, how is it possible for that mind to be in subjection to such a law whose affections are wholly set on the things and interests of a passing world? It not only is not subject to this law, but it cannot be so—else it were no longer carnal. It would instantly be stripped of this epithet, and become a different thing from what it was before, did it undergo a transference in its likings from the things that are made to Him who is the Maker of them all. It has all the certainty in it of an identical proposition, when it is said of the carnal mind that it neither is nor can be subject to God's law. Ere it become subject, it must resign its present nature and be carnal no longer. The epithet then will not apply to it; and though a mind before carnal should now have gathered upon it the character of heaven, and become a devoted and willing and most affectionate subject under the government

of God—still it holds true of the carnal mind that it is not so subject, neither indeed can be.

But it is not only logically true that the carnal mind cannot be subject to God's law, the same thing is also true physically and experimentally. There is no power in the mind by which it can change itself. It has a natural sovereignty, we admit, which extends a certain way over the doings of the outer man; but it has no such sovereignty over the desires of the inner man. It can, for example, constrain the man in whom it resides to eat a sour apple rather than a sweet; but it cannot constrain him to like a sour apple rather than a sweet. There are many things which it finds to be practicable which it does not find to be palatable; and it has just as little power over the taste and affections of the mind toward God, as it has over the bodily organ of taste, or the law of its various relishes for the various food which is offered to it. There are a thousand religious looking things which can be done; but, without such a renewal of the spirit as the spirit itself cannot achieve, these things cannot be delighted in, cannot be rejoiced in. But if not rejoiced in, they really are not religious, however religious they may look. And this is the great moral helplessness under which we labour. We can compel our feet to the house of God, but we cannot compel our feelings to a sacred pleasure in its exercises. We can take a voluntary part in the music of its psalms, but we cannot force into our hearts the melody of praise. We can bid our hands away from depredation and violence, but we cannot bid away the appetite of covetousness from our bosoms. We can refrain ourselves from the infliction of all outward hurt upon our neighbour; but tell me, if we can so muster and so dispose of our affections at the word of command, as that we shall love him as we do ourselves? And ascending from the second great commandment to the first great commandment of the law, we can, it may be thought, keep the Sabbaths of the Lord and acquit ourselves of many of the drudgeries of a carnal obedience; while, instead of loving Him with all our heart and soul and strength and mind, there exists against Him an antipathy, which we can no more extirpate than we can cause a sycamine tree to be plucked up by the roots at the utterance of a voice; so that, in reference to the law which claims a supremacy over the heart and taketh cognisance of all its affections, we are not and we cannot be subject to it.

And here I am sensible that when I charge you with a

positive enmity against God—when I say that He is not merely the object of indifference but of hatred—when I affirm of the human heart, not merely a light and heedless unconcern about Him, but also the virulency of a strong hostile affection against Him—I might not, in all this assertion, obtain the exact or the willing responsdency of your own consciences. You may be ready to answer, Really we are not at all aware of anything half so foul or so enormous at work in our bosoms, as any ill-will towards God. We may be abundantly regardless of Him and of His laws, but we feel not anything that approaches to a resentful emotion excited within us by His name. We may not think of Him often, and perhaps are very well satisfied to do without Him, if He would but let us alone. But examine ourselves as we may, we can detect no affirmative malignity in our affections towards Him; and for once we have lighted upon a case, where the dogmata of a stern theology are really not at one with the decisions of our own intimate and personal experience.

Now on this we have to observe, that the greatest enemy whom you have in the world will excite no malevolent feeling in your heart, so long as you do not think of him. All the time that he is absent from your remembrance, he has no more power to stir up the painful and the bitter feeling of hostility within you than if he were blotted out from the map of existence. And so let it not be wondered at, that you should not be ruffled out of your complacency by the thought of God, when in fact, for days or hours together, the thought is utterly away from you; that no acrimony about Him should ever disturb you, during the whole of that period, when at play or pleasing yourselves with His gifts, the Giver is wholly unminded; that instead of carrying the tone or the aspect of an enraged adversary toward God or any one else, you should simply appear in the light of an easy, comfortable, good-humoured man, while, busied with the enjoyments of life, you have no room in your regards for Him who gave the life, and scattered these enjoyments over it. When one is in a deep and dreamless slumber, his very resentments are hushed, along with all his other sensibilities, into oblivion; and though in the latent dormitory within, there may lie a fell and unextinguishable hatred against the deadliest of his foes, yet even the presence of that foe will awaken no asperity; and, while under the immediate eye of him whom with implacable revenge he could call forth to the

field of mutual extermination, might he lie in all the meekness of infancy. And so of you who are not awake unto God—who are sunk in dullest apathy about Him and all His concerns—who, profoundly asleep and forgetful, are really no judges of the recoil that would come upon your spirits, did He but stand before you in all His characters of uncompromising truth, and inflexible justice, and sacred jealousy, and awful unapproachable holiness. By the thought of this Being you are not disturbed, because, steeped in the lethargy of nature, it is a thought that does not come with a realizing touch upon your perceptions. You may even hear His name, and this may stir up some vague conception of an unseen Spirit; and you still may have no feeling of that enmity which our text has charged upon you. But the conception of whom or of what, we would ask? Is it of the true God in His true attributes, or a being of your own imagination? Is it of that God who is a Spirit, and claims of you those spiritual services which are due unto the character that belongs to Him? Is it of Him, the very view and aspect of whom would mar all your earthly gratifications, or put them utterly to flight, because of His paramount demand for the affections and pursuits of godliness? Oh! how little do we know of ourselves, or of the mysteries of our inner man, which may lie hid and dormant for years, till some untried circumstances shall form the occasion that proves us, and reveals to us all which is in our hearts. And thus the manifestation to our understandings of God, not as we fancy Him to be, but of God as He actually is, would call forth of its hiding-place the unappeasable enmity of nature against Him; and would make it plain to the conscience of the carnal man, how little sufferance he hath for the God that would bereave him of his present affections, and implant others in their room. The disrelish would be just as strong as are the disrelish and opposition between the life of sense and the life of faith. Did God reveal Himself now to the unconverted sinner, He would strike the same arrow into his heart that will be felt by the condemned sinner, who eyes on the day of reckoning the sacredness and the majesty of that Being whom he has offended. You have heard Him by the hearing of the ear, and yet remain unconvinced of nature's enmity. Could you say with Job—Now mine eye seeth, then would you see cause wherefore with him you should abhor yourself, and repent in dust and in ashes.

Ver. 8.—My remarks have been hitherto on the hostility

that is in our hearts towards God; but this verse leads us to consider the hostility that is in God's heart toward us. If we cannot please God we necessarily displease Him; nor need we to marvel why all they who are in the flesh are the objects of His dissatisfaction. We may be still in the flesh, yet do a thousand things, as I said before, that, in the letter and in the exterior of them, bear a visible conformity to God's will, and yet cannot be pleasing to Him. They may be done from the dread of His power; they may be done under the trembling apprehension of a threatened penalty; they may be done to appease the restlessness of an alarmed conscience; they may be done under the influence of a religion that derives all its power over us from education or custom, or the exactions of a required and established decency; and yet not be done with the concurrence of the heart, not be done from a liking either to the task or to the bidder of it, not from a delight in the commandment but from the slavish fear of that Master who issued it. And however multiplied the offerings may be, which we lay on the altar of such a reluctant obedience as this, they will not and cannot be pleasing to God. Would any father amongst you be satisfied with such a style of compliance and submission from your own children? Would the labour of their hands be counted enough, though the love of their hearts was withheld from you? Would you think that you had all out of them which was desirable, because you had as much of drudgery as was laid upon them, however grievous you saw was the distaste which they felt for you and for all your requirements? If it were quite palpable that their inclinations were in a state of revolt against you, would you think it ample compensation that you still could restrain their outward movements, and by the force or terror of your authority, could compel from them the homage of all their services? Oh! let us know if you could sit down in complacency, because of such an obedience from your own children! And if you but saw that in their hearts they were inly pining and murmuring and feeling resentfully because of the utter repugnance which they felt to you and to your exactions, were it not the most wretched of all atonements, that still the bidding was executed, and still the task was performed by them?

And it is thus that I would like to reach the hearts of the careless, with the alarm of a guilt and a danger far greater than they have ever been aware of. I should like them to

understand that they are indeed the haters of God—that they hate Him for what He is, and hate Him for what He requires at their hands; and though this hostile propensity of theirs lies hid in deep insensibility, when amidst the bustle and the engrossment and the intense pursuits or gratifications of the world there is nothing to call it out into distinct exhibition—yet that a demonstration of the divine will or the divine character is all which is needed to bring up the latent virulence that is lurking in the bosom, and to convict the now placid and amiable man that he is indeed an enemy to his Maker. And in these circumstances is his Maker also an enemy to him. The frown of an offended Lawgiver resteth on every one who lives in habitual violation of His first and greatest commandment. There is a day of reckoning that awaits him. There is a true and unerring judgment which is in reserve for him. That enmity which now perhaps is a secret to himself, will become manifest on the great occasion when the secrets of all hearts shall be laid open; and the justice of God will then be vindicated in dealing with him as an enemy. Such is the condition, and such are the prospects of all who remain what Nature made them; who, still in the flesh, have not been translated to that new moral existence into which all are ushered who are born again; and who by simply being lovers of the creature more than of the Creator, prove themselves to be still carnally minded and to be the heirs of death.

And it is only by taking a deep view of the disease that you can be led adequately to estimate the remedy. There is a way of transition from the carnal to the spiritual. There is a distinct and applicable call that may be addressed even to the farthest off in alienation; and which, if he will hear and follow, shall transform him from one of the children of this world to one of the children of light. The trumpet giveth not an uncertain sound, for it declares the remission of sin through the blood of Jesus, and repentance through the Spirit which is at His giving; and your faith in the one will infallibly bring down upon you all the aids and influences of the other. To you who are afar off is this salvation preached; and the grand connecting tie by which it is secured and appropriated to your soul, is simply the credit that you give to the word of this testimony. Many feel not the disease; and so all the proclamations of grace pass unheeded by. Many listen to them as they would to a pleasant song; but the form of sound words is enough for them,

and the realities which these words express never find admittance into their bosoms. But some there are whose ears and whose eyes are opened—who are made to hear with effect, and to behold the wondrous things that are contained in the Word of God. With them the gospel is something more than a sound or an imagination. To them it bears all the character of a great authentic transaction between Heaven and Earth. And they see God as God in Christ waiting to be gracious; and they no longer stand in dread of a justice that is now most abundantly satisfied; and they can brave the contemplation of all the attributes, wherewith mercy to themselves is now blended in fullest harmony; and they rejoice to behold that the throne of Heaven is at once upheld in all its august dignity, and yet that even the chief of sinners has a warrant to approach it; and while they take to themselves the security that is guaranteed by the atonement on the cross, they feel how that very atonement affords most entire illustration of the sacredness of the Godhead. And thus, uniting peace to their own souls with glory to God in the highest, they experience a love which was before unfelt, which weans them from all their idolatrous affections, and translates them from the state of the carnally to that of the spiritually minded.

LECTURE L.

ROMANS VIII. 9.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.
Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

THERE is nought more undeniable than the antipathy of nature to the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. This, it is likely, may have been felt by many of yourselves—and many have been the devices of human ingenuity for mitigating the offensive features of the truth as it is in Jesus. We are not sure but that the doctrine of the Spirit calls out a more painful revolt from the children of this world than even the doctrine of the Sacrifice; at least the attempts and plausibilities have been just as frequent for explaining it away. And this perhaps is the right place for adverting to the way in which it has been endeavoured to make more palpable all that is revealed of the Holy Ghost and of His regenerating influence upon man that it naturally is to unrenewed taste—more fitted to satisfy the demand which obtains for a religion that shall be altogether rational and devoid of mystery.

Agreeably to this it has been affirmed, that to have the Spirit of God implies no personal visitation by Him upon the soul; and more particularly, no indwelling on His part in man as His residence or as His habitation. One, it is thought, may be rightly enough said to have the Spirit of God, if from any cause whatever it so happens that there be a resemblance of character and disposition and principle between him and the Divinity—just as any active and devoted philanthropist of our day may be said to have the spirit of Howard, without its ever being imagined that there has been any transmigration into his body of that soul by which the body of Howard was animated. All that is intended is, that there is a common or kindred character between the one philanthropist and the other—just as we would say of a philosopher that he had the spirit of Newton; or of a

daring conspirator that he had the soul of Catiline. And thus has it been attempted to gloss over the truth that there is in the souls of believers an actual occupancy by a Spirit from on high, or even so much as the communication of any influence from the one to the other; and to have the Spirit of God is understood as nothing more than to be in the possession of god-like excellencies or virtues—that to have the Spirit of Christ is nothing more than just to have the like mind in us that was also in the Lord Jesus.

It is their favourite imagination of the sufficiency of human nature which attaches them to this style of interpretation. They look upon it as a nature liable to the errors and infirmities of an occasional waywardness, but as radically and substantially sound, and possessed within itself of energies and principles enough for the attainment of all that spiritual excellence which qualifies for heaven. They deem it to be in the power of ordinary moral suasion from without to guide and accomplish humanity for the joys of an everlasting state; and they utterly repudiate the conception of anything so altogether visionary in their eyes as that of a new and preternatural infusion from above, by which the mind of man is transformed—and an impulse given diametrically opposite to the bias of those native and original propensities which belong to it. They count, in fact, upon no greater transition than from what is held base and dishonourable in our world to what is held in it worthy of moral estimation. Now the fact is undeniable, that there are very many who stand in no need of any such transition at all; however great the revolution of principle must be, by which, from being the creatures of sight and of sense and of mere earthliness, we are led to walk by faith—to be habitually and practically conversant with the things of an unseen world—to hold the concerns of immortality as paramount to all the pursuits and interests of a fleeting pilgrimage; and above all, to have a continual respect unto God as the supreme Master both of our affections and of our performances—as the Being with whom we most emphatically have to do. Now you, I trust, are aware of the necessity of this transition—of the magnitude of that change which all must undergo ere they are fit for that heaven, the delights and the occupations of which are at such variance with the delights and occupations of this planet, now in a state of exile from heaven's family. And in proportion as you highly estimate the requisite transformation, so will you highly esti-

mate the requisite power for carrying it into accomplishment; and you will be prepared for all the descriptions which the Bible gives of the utter helplessness of man in himself for so mighty and decisive a change upon his own constitution—that just as there is nought of energy in a dead body for the revival of itself, but the principle of animation must come to it from without—so we, to be quickened unto a right sense of spiritual things, and to be made alive to the power of them, must be the subjects of a foreign or adventitious influence which has no original residence in our nature; must be born again; must have the Spirit of God to dwell in us; must be operated upon by an energy as distinct and separate from our own proper selves, as the body of Christ was: and accordingly are we told in one of these verses, that it is He who raised up Christ from the dead who also quickens our mortal bodies by the Spirit which dwelleth in us.

It is this, in fact, which advances our state from that of being in the flesh to that of our being in the Spirit. We are in the latter state, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in us. It is upon the entrance of Him who bloweth where He listeth, that the whole of this great translation hinges; and it is well that you know, in all its certainty and distinctness, what that event is by which we are called out from death unto life—from being the children of this world to being the children of God's kingdom.

‘Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.’ Still to have the Spirit of Christ is here to be understood, not in the light of our possessing a kindred character to that of Christ, but of our being the subjects of an actual and personal inhabitation by the Spirit. The Spirit of God may be denominated the Spirit of Christ, either because the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Father and the Son; or more particularly, because the Son, now that He is exalted at the Father's right hand, is intrusted with the dispensation of Him. You know the order of this economy in the work of our redemption. Christ finished on earth the work that was given Him to do. He yielded, in our stead, a perfect obedience to the law of God; and He suffered, in our stead, all the penalties that were annexed to its violation. And having thus wrought our acceptance with God, He attained as His reward the power of sanctifying all those whom He had saved. That instrument was put into His hands by which He could wash away the

pollution of that sin whose guilt He had expiated—and by which He could beautify with all the lustre of heaven's graces, those for whom He had purchased a right of admittance into heaven's family. Our renewal unto holiness and virtue is in fact part of the fruit of the travail of His soul; and the way in which it is accomplished is by the forthgoing of the Spirit at the bidding or will of our exalted Saviour. When He ascended on high, it is said that He led captivity captive, and obtained gifts for men, even for the rebellious; and the supereminent of these gifts is the Holy Spirit. It is through Christ that the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are shed upon us abundantly. It is when the Spirit descends upon us that the power of Christ is said to rest upon us. Hence the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ are equivalent the one to the other. And as the Saviour uniformly regenerates all whom He redeems—as the conjunction is invariable between the penalty being lifted off from our persons and a purifying influence being laid upon our characters—as it is true, even in the moral sense of the term, that if He wash us not we have no part in Him: the truth is inevitable, and cannot be too urgently impressed on all our consciences, that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

But though it must not be denied that to have the Spirit of Christ implies the entrance and the abode of a personal visitor with the soul, yet we have no other way of ascertaining that we have been thus privileged but by our having become like in character with the Saviour. We can only judge of His being in us by the impress He has made upon us. He often enters without one note of preparation, like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, and we know not whence it cometh. It is by the fruit alone that we know; and there is not another method of verifying that He has been at work with our souls, but by the workmanship that is manifest thereupon. So that though to have the Spirit of Christ be something more than that our spirit is like unto His, yet it is by the latter only as the effect that we can infer the operation of the Saviour as the cause. And therefore the question—whether you belong to the Saviour or not? still hinges upon the question—whether there be the same mind in you that was also in the Lord Jesus?

And therefore it is thus that we ought to examine ourselves. That we may know what to pray for, we should advert to the work of God's Spirit upon our soul—as that by which alone the

requisite transformation into another character can take effect upon us. But then to fix and ascertain the question, whether there have been any such work? we have nought to do but to read the lineaments of that character. It is right to be humbled into the impression of our own original and utter worthlessness, as destitute of any good thing; and as wanting the power in ourselves, either to import what is good from abroad, or to raise it from within by any operation which lies within the compass of Nature's mechanism. It is but proper for us to know, that for all that is of spiritual worth or estimation belonging to us we stand indebted to an influence that is exterior to ourselves, and that comes to us from abroad—so as that each may say with the apostle—"Nevertheless not me, but the grace of God that is in me." Yet ought it never to be forgotten, that generally it is by the result of the visitation, and not by any sensible circumstances attendant upon the time of it, that we come to know whether the Spirit of God be really in us or not. It hinges on the question—whether we are like unto God or like unto Christ, who is His image, and was His sensible representative in the world? and thus the most direct way of settling the inquiry, is to compare our character with that of the Saviour—our history with the history and doings of Christ upon earth.

And yet at present we should not like to discourage any from their intended approach to His sacrament,* because of the width and magnitude of that actual dissimilarity which obtains between their Saviour and themselves. They cannot dare to affirm that they have yet grown up unto the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus. They perhaps are nought but humbled and abashed, when they compare their own attainments of patience, and piety, and unwearied beneficence, with those of that high and heavenly exemplar who is set before them in the gospel. They could not venture to sit down and participate in the coming festival, if the question turned on such a family likeness between them and the Master of the entertainment as would mark them to be children of the same God, and members of the same spiritual brotherhood; and therefore let us assure them, that their right to place themselves at the table of the Lord is not an argument of degree as to their actual progress in the divine life, but a question of principle as to their aims and their desires after it. Do they hunger and thirst after right-

* Delivered shortly before the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

eousness? Do they look unto Christ, not merely for the purpose of confidence, but also for the purpose of imitation? Is it the honest aspiration of their souls, under all the helplessness they feel, and the burden of those deficiencies over which they mourn and are in heaviness—that they may indeed be visited by a more copious descent of the Spirit's influence, and so attain a higher conformity to the image of the Saviour? Then sure as we are that Christ would not have spurned them from His presence had He still been sojourning amongst us in the world—neither can we interdict the approaches of such unto the Saviour, through one of His own bidden and appointed ordinances. The Sacrament we hold to be not merely a privilege, but a means of grace—a privilege to all who choose the Saviour as their alone dependence for time and for eternity; and a means of grace to all who—humbled at their distance and deficiency from the perfections of the sanctuary above, seek to the instituted ordinances of the scene of preparation below, for the advancement of their meetness for the inheritance. Even for that very Spirit, the presence of which you long to ascertain, I would bid you come to this place of meeting, and see whether the blessing will not be shed forth upon you: 'Turn unto me, saith God, and I will pour out my Spirit.' And sure we are, that there is not a likelier attitude for receiving the full and the free supplies of it, than when you look in faith to the consecrated symbols of that atonement, through which alone it is that a sinner may draw nigh, and over which alone it is that a holy God can rejoice over you. Come—but come with a sincere purpose. Come in honesty. Come aware of the total renovation which your personal Christianity implies. Come free of all those superficial and meagre conceptions of it which are so current in the midst of this really infidel world. Come resolved to be and to do all that the Master of that assembly would have you; and look unto Him for the perfection of His own work upon your character, that in you He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

END OF VOL. I.

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